Binding Dionysus

Agent & Person
in
Euripides' *Bacchae*

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Preface

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The conventions for abbreviation adopted in this book have been those of *The Oxford Classical Dictionary* [edd.] Hammond, N.G.L. & Scullard, H.H. 1970. Oxford.

The primary text used for quotation from *Bacchae* has been Diggle. When line numbers appear sans reference to author or text (for example "24-6" as opposed to Eur. *Her*. 24-6), then those numbers should be read as line references to *Bacchae* – e.g. "24-6" = "Eur. *Ba.* 24-6". Works other than *Bacchae* have always been cited with their author text abbreviation.

Occasional reference is made to L and P, these are the conventional designations for the Byzantine manuscripts on which modern editions are based. For a succinct account these, texts see Dodds: li-lix.

Part I
Tragic Agents

1

Introduction

Towards an Anthropology of Agency and Personhood in Greek Poetry

ἢ οὐκ ἤσθησαι ὅτι ἔστιν τι μεταξὺ σοφίας καὶ ἀμαθίας;
Τί τοῦτο;

— Or have you not perceived that there is something in between wisdom and ignorance?
— What is that?[1]

1.1 The Subject of *Bacchae*: Identifying the Object of Interpretation

Dionysus is difficult. He is difficult to understand, hard to locate, never pinned down and impossible to retain, even if he is momentarily grasped. Our notion of what the human subject is will determine how we appraise the representation of subjects and what we expect to find there. The same may be said of human subjectivity, the mind, consciousness, 'whatever we ought to call'[2] the essential property of persons that we value so dearly in ourselves and in others, which we say is their unique, personal identity. Identity and the nature of persons – what these are and their quality as agents of themselves and their own desires, judgements and choices – these are the strands of the enigma at the heart of Euripides' *Bacchae*. In the first encounter between god and man, Dionysus is giving loaded, incomprehensible replies to the king. He is frustrating understanding, rather than communicating; casting shadows rather than light. He is speaking 'complexly': *at* certain levels but simultaneously also *across* certain levels and purposes. Pentheus is speaking

[1] Pl. *Sym*. 202a 2-4.

[2] Cf. Alcibiades' mildly aporetic remarks at Pl. *Sym.* 217e 6-18a 5: τὴν καρδίαν γὰρ ἢ ψυχὴν ἢ ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸ ὀνομάσαι.

simply, "from his heart, clearly, without ulterior purpose, *epitēdes*", as Menelaus puts it in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, the play performed for the first time just hours before *Bacchae* at the Dionysia in 405 BCE[3].

Pentheus will wish to have the Stranger bound, having lost the easy confidence he showed at the opening of the exchange, when, with assurance, he told the guard to undo the captive, for he was "in our trammels, not quick enough to escape me now"[4]. Dionysus warns that he must not be bound, that Pentheus is not in his right mind[5]. Pentheus in turn replies that he *will* have him bound, because he has "more power", *kuriōteros*[6]. For Dionysus it is a profounder question than who has more force; it is a problem here of identity that is at issue: it is not power that defines identities and how they relate to each other; identity is anterior, by Dionysus' logic. Pentheus does not recognize the deeper, divine identity of Dionysus or the meaningfulness of his rites, their substantial 'contents'. He does not recognize his own identity either, which is not the obvious one it seems, 506-7:

> Di. οὐκ οἶσθ' †ὅτι ζῇς† οὐδ' ὃ δρᾷς οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ.[7]
> Pe. Πενθεύς, Ἀγαυῆς παῖς, πατρὸς δ' Ἐχίονος.
>
> Di. You don't know †what (life) you are living†, not what you are doing nor even who you are.
> Pe. Pentheus, Agauē's child, by Echion the father.

It is the meaning *within* forms that Pentheus consistently fails to discern. He cannot interpret the riddle of his own identity, wrapped up in the meaning of a sign very close to him – his own name – the import of which he fails to decipher, 508: ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοὔνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ, "You are suited [*epitēdeios*] by your name to be unfortunate"[8]. He is a man who hits on the truth only inadvertently, involuntarily – *akousion* – and cannot piece together even the meaning of his own claims or the contents of signs most "at hand", *paronta*. His name has the ulterior meaning inside itself, *penthos*, "woe", "grief", which this inferrer of the motives and meanings of others imprudently fails to heed. Tellingly does Teiresias, *mantis*, the diviner whom he repudiates, say to him in the first episode, 358-9:

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[3] Eur. *IA* 475-6: ἦ μὴν ἐρεῖν σοι τἀπὸ καρδίας σαφῶς / καὶ μὴ 'πίτηδες μηδέν, ἀλλ' ὅσον φρονῶ.

[4] 451-2: μέθεσθε χειρῶν τοῦδ'· ἐν ἄρκυσιν γὰρ ὢν / οὐκ ἔστιν οὕτως ὠκὺς ὥστε μ' ἐκφυγεῖν.

[5] 504: αὐδῶ με μὴ δεῖν, σωφρονῶν οὐ σώφροσιν.

[6] 505: ἐγὼ δὲ δεῖν γε, κυριώτερος σέθεν.

[7] On this textually problematic line, see also below p. 73 § 2.2.1.2 n. 122.

[8] Cf. also Teiresias' 367-9: Πενθεὺς δ' ὅπως μὴ πένθος εἰσοίσει δόμοις / τοῖς σοῖσι, Κάδμε· μαντικῆι μὲν οὐ λέγω, / τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ· μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει.

> ὦ σχέτλι', ὡς οὐκ οἶσθα ποῦ ποτ' εἶ λόγων·
> μέμηνας ἤδη, καὶ πρὶν ἐξεστὼς φρενῶν.
>
> Oh wretched man [*schetli'*], how you do not even know what you are saying;
> You are by now raving mad, you were out of [*exestōs*: "stood outside of"]
> your mind [*phrenes*] even before.

Pentheus is ignorant of how he stands in relation to his own words – ποῦ ποτ' εἶ λόγων lit. "where ever you are [in relation to] your words" – his own contents, which he keeps spilling out uncomprehendingly.

The subject of *Bacchae* is not what theatre is, but what persons are. It shows forms and acts but its interest is in the motivations of acts and the contents of forms. Dionysus is not a god for whom ritual actions suffice and he does not only introduce ritualistic formulae in Euripides' vision: the meaning of himself and of the acts and moods he introduces is at stake and matters to him. The play wants the meaning within rites and the motivation predicting actions and choice to matter to its mortal spectators too.

It does happen that "person" is theatrical and the agency of persons is a tragic and comic drama. In what does identity consist, that it means so much to humans? What is the relationship between roles and reality, between acts and character? What is this property, which gives lives their value, that is also so hard to define, that is only ever approached obliquely? People ought to "know themselves", so what is this self which is the subject of the knowledge that always arrives too late in Tragedy? By what means does one secure this knowledge? These are the questions opened up in the play, and they are not entirely resolved. If *Bacchae* is about representation, that is because in the complicated enigma of representation, dissemblance, *eirōneia* and its relation to truth, the strangeness of human life and the fictional character of personhood, in which performance and a certain kind of social and cognitive theatricality seem to be indispensable, are divulged. In *Bacchae* "person" and the quality of "agency" are opened up and made manifest. It is revealed that desire, judgement and choice, and how we articulate our desires, will *constitute* what kind of insides – what kind of inner identity – we may be said to have. "Person" is not like the naïve conception of "structure", criticized by Anthony Giddens[9]; it is not a scaffold or framework on which character is hung, like a flowing saffron gown on a staff[10].

[9] See Giddens, 1979, 1984 for the critique of structuralism and functionalism and the dynamic "structuration" he offers in place.

[10] As Dionysus was figured in cult and at such festivals as the Anthesteria, see § 6.2-4.

In the late 1970s and early 1980s, Giddens was one of the important voices – like Clifford Geertz and Cornelius Castoriadis in the early 1970s or Ian Hodder's Cambridge archaeology seminar – seeking to balance the distortions introduced by the timeless modalities of structuralist and functionalist objectivism with a re-articulated conception of agency and its fundamental place in historical life[11]. There is, for Giddens, a naïve conception of structure, which is "closely connected to the dualism of subject and social object", associated with the functionalists "and, indeed, the vast majority of social analysts"[12]. This conception typically imagines structure visually. Structure here is "akin to the skeleton or morphology of an organism or to the girders of a building"[13]. Most significant for us is the observation that in such a *Vorstellung*, structure is conceived as "'external' to human action, as a source of constraint on the free initiative of the independently constituted subject"[14]. Structure by this common-sense view will be determining for the civic subject, the protagonist of history and its framed representation in myth, the tragic protagonist. It is important to be conscious of this: if we have this understanding of structure it will shape the possibilities we admit for humans as social actors. It will define the parameters of our analysis.

The more subtle and "interesting" conceptualization of structure, found among the post-structuralists, will have peculiar resonance for the student of the *Epiphaniengott*, Dionysus. There, structure is "not thought of as a patterning of presences, but as an intersection of presence and absence; underlying codes have to be inferred from surface manifestations."[15] It is fundamental to Giddens' theory that he seeks to reconcile these two conceptualizations – external, substantial girding and insubstantial, inferred intersections of absence and presence – in a more differentiated picture of structure, which he calls *structuration*. To this end, he introduces the distinctions of "structure" and "system" and essentially aligns the former with 'a paradigmatic dimension': "a virtual order of 'modes of structuring' recursively implicated" in the reproduction of situated practices[16].

There is not some transcendent, essential part that determines acts and thoughts here, that has not been projected. Acts, thoughts and emotions *are* what constitute persons, just as

[11] Geertz, 1973; Castoriadis, 1975; Hodder, 1979.

[12] Giddens, 1984: 16.

[13] Giddens, 1984: 16. Cf. the 'axes', horizontal and vertical in the world of *Bacchae*, according to Charles Segal, 1997 [1982]: 78-157. Revealing metaphors: cf. Burkert's notion of Civilization, i.e. "culture" as a "Kruste", a thin membrane easily pierced: in *Homo Necans*, Burkert, 1972: "Wir wissen heute, daß Theophrast und viele andere Romatiker sich über die entwicklung der Menscheit entäuscht habe: es ist vielmehr der alte Jagdinstinkt, der die Kruste der Zivilsation durchbricht. Längst hatte sich hinter der Heiligkeit des Altars die Aggression gestaut, die ihr Opfer erwartet und findet." See also *GR,* 2011 (1977): 90.

[14] Giddens, 1984: 16.

[15] Giddens, 1984: 16. The structure of society then is not like that of molecules but rather like that of flashing atoms that appear when they are looked for.

[16] Giddens, 1984: 17.

culture does not represent what societies are; it *is* what society is. A person is not a skeleton wearing the flesh and clothing of passing culture, but is itself something virtual, a thread, we may say, that binds together acts over time. Our saying so is itself the creative, constitutive binding gesture. Person is not *there*. And yet the sufficient condition for a personhood that matters most is embodied personhood. Something in humans longs for physical co-presence, as Achilles in Hades longs for mortal life and a body, even as the lowest serf, rather than to be the king in an empire of bodiless presences. It appears when we make the more valid or commensurate connection between things or events over time, as Pentheus fails to do. Articulation is constitutive, for it is 'intersective', in a very real sense momentarily binding together presence and absence and making codes manifest on the 'surface' of discourse. This intersecting quality, the dynamic relation between absence and presence, is in fact the most characteristic quality of Dionysus.

'Looking at *Bacchae*', as one recent book on the play is cleverly called[17], means being in Dionysus' *vicinity* for a while, being made to experience, to see and even feel the effects of Dionysus' presence – that is the ingenious effect also of Euripides' artfulness. The audience comes to know, as if *empirically*, bacchic inspiration and *mania*, to learn both its divinely regenerative and sickly human forms. The Dionysiac experience is transformative: it is like a form of wealth, which is not simply the accumulation of objects or a learning, not merely the addition of contents of knowledge, but which changes the nature of the vessel and its contents. The experience – *pathos* – of Dionysus represents always the acquisition of a transformative knowledge – *mathos*. When this is healthy it has a "perfective", "consummative" power, *teleios.* It binds a person together to be seen as a whole, not a set of momentary acts dispersed over time. This is what takes place in drama and this is what happens to the initiate in Dionysiac rites.

In English we speak of "initiation" and "rites", but while sacrifice is "initiatory", *archesthai*, what Dionysus does, says the Greek, is "consummatory": it completes persons, it makes them "whole". At least for a time, it transforms their identity in time by making them "finished", *telestos*. Joyless Pentheus, *abaccheutos*, and Thebes, for which he stands synechdochically, remains obdurately *atelestos*[18]. He will become literally and forever an incomplete *thing* because he never availed of Dionysus' gift to mortals: an identity that is spiritually intact. It is the lot of mortals while they live to be unfinished, ununified beings (and that even in the Homeric Afterlife where they are sorrowful, longing identities). They are disputatious and contentious creatures of *agōn* – struggling with others in a social world

[17] Stuttard.

[18] 40: ἀτέλεστον οὖσαν τῶν ἐμῶν βακχευμάτων.

of perpetual frictions, struggles with self –*mermēra*– dilemma, doubt, debate and anxiety. Dionysus brings an extraordinary respite to humans, relief from one another and from oneself. His gift is self-transcendence for the *polis* and self-transcendence for the individual. His gift is a gift of grace, which he alone gives – his presence, himself. And recursively his presence – in the happy sociality of wine-drinking, *symposion*, revel, festival, dramatic spectacle, chorus – is signalled when this relief from the day-to-day *durée* and from the vigilance of sober consciousness is being experienced.

1.2 *Ti boulomai gar*?[19]

Dionysus requires interpretation. Few can agree what the manifest god, a person of the most dramatic self-revelations, means. One cannot but be aware, with every claim made about him, of objections that will flow from those claims[20]. It is not intended to set this argument beyond dispute, on the contrary one of the main premises here is related to this generally recognized point: Euripides' Dionysus complicates how he himself is to be known and *Bacchae* problematizes knowledge, inference and interpretation in themselves. There is a meta-interpretive dimension called for in engagement with this god and with Euripides' play, so marked by ambiguity and opaqueness. We are asked not simply to interpret but to become aware of the judgements involved in interpretation[21].

Dionysus is epiphanic and revelatory, but thwarts recognition of himself. He takes *many* forms in time, but has *one* super-temporal identity. He *is* one person, son of Zeus and Semelē, but *becomes* many different shapes, *morphai*. The play does not simply reflect popular religion or piously allude to mysteries through a suggestive hush. It is itself an interpretive act. It *modifies* what Dionysus is, and this interpretation has an ulterior motive. This, in part, is to identify and explore what the form and contents of an ethical existence may be; how inaccessible to people that kind of existence mostly is; what the doorway or portal to such a life might be, or what it might only seem to be. Euripides may entertain and he may record religious-historical data, but the position taken in this study is that he also, if not primarily, has an ethical and philosophical objective, *telos*. His religious vision is not simply a transmission of form or formulae, but the communication of that religion's

[19] τί βούλομαι γάρ; Eur. *IA* 485: "what do I want?" see below p. 88 § 2.7 n. 324 and p. 135 § 3.3.8 n. 250.

[20] Cf. Versnel, 1990: 96 "Every reader gets the *Bacchae* he deserves. No two scholars agree on the meaning of the play, let alone on the intention of its author. So, from the middle of the last century onwards we can perceive a discouraging procession of conflicting interpretations, expanding *alarmingly* in the last few decades."

[21] This fact about *Bacchae* is what gives rise to so many reflections amongst scholars on the "meta-tragic" in the drama and the "meta-poetics" of Euripides; see Segal, 1997; Bierl, 1991; Thumiger, 2009; Torrance, 2013; Schwartz, 2013.

emotional and ethical contents. This *telos* is shown to be indistinct from that of traditional belief; not a matter for *philosophes*, and not arrived at through the rational processes of elenchus. It is the product of a certain kind of *knowledgeability*, which is of time and does not stand outside of time. Its location is in this world, between persons. It issues from feeling and a certain quality of responsiveness and receptiveness; it is not transcendentally remote, looking down upon existence as if from the outside.

The ambition of this study is twofold and necessarily modest. I set out, firstly, to show how ancient and modern philosophical perspectives – those of Aristotle and Charles Taylor – can be adapted to illuminate *Bacchae* as a dynamic and differentiated picture of desire, judgement, choice, deliberation and values. The attempt is made to demonstrate the centrality of an ethics and psychology of volition in *Bacchae*. Humans are potentially "agentful" subjects. The value judgement that Euripides seems to make is that they *ought* to meet their potential, they ought to wish to be more fully "agentful", and not simply the unreflective objects of emotional and spiritual forces they have not recognized and articulated. This *ought* carries much weight and only opens more questions. *Bacchae* is a world of contradiction. What will it mean to be "more agentful"? What is the identity of the self? Is it that which does not wish as it ought; which wishes it did wish as it ought; which reflects on the nature of its wishes? Or is it that which simply spontaneously wishes? Which is the more authentic, and how is it that one should be *ontically* privileged over the other? These are problems of authority and verification and they run like currents under the surface of the play.

Human subjects are filled up with emotions, desires, libidinal energy, preferences and aversions. They are marked by a surfeit of desires that present themselves simultaneously and, when consciously, as alternatives. Uniquely, they do not just feel desire for things outside of themselves. They are not mere conduits of natural process or playthings of external, *daemonic* forces. They also feel the desire to have certain desires and not others. They feel that it matters to be one kind of person and not another. This is the nub of agency as it will be conceptualized here. It is the capacity to project an identity and evaluate it.

Subjects are entities that by a kind of cognitive and psychological theatricality, can look upon themselves as if from an outside viewpoint. They can select, edit and judge themselves, articulate what is inside. They evaluate, weighing things up and contrasting one value against another. Agency is a potential of beings that have language. It consists of the ability to wish differently, to desire certain desires and repudiate others: the potential to become different. On the virtual screen of consciousness, a perpetually ad hoc *skēnē*, subjects have this power to project themselves *qua* self; to project an identity somehow objective,

transcending time and bodily life, and therefore to examine self and modify what it is that one is or shall be. This does not mean that persons are subjective or objective, only that there is a constant cinematographic quality of mind, through which, enigmatically, and with a dizzyingly dynamic recursiveness, subjects can study themselves *as* objects; through which objects seem to be animated with the living character of subjects of themselves, looking out, feeling and conceiving.

Dionysus, celebrated by some as the god of spontaneous liberation from a constricting social order, is not simply a *releaser* in *Bacchae*, but in his person and acts represents the promise of a different kind of *binding together* of subjects – a binding of persons in a kind of 'intactness with self' and in a compactness with their social others. He reveals a rhythm between authority and license, between the centripetal and centrifugal, between the gathering together of person and its dispersion. We discern exactly this tension in the world of Thebes in *Bacchae*, a tension between visions of the healthy community of persons on one hand, and of the disorderly breakdown of the supra-individual person – community – on the other. Dionysus' *thiasos* of barbarian bacchants represents a utopian picture of community, unanimous and perfectly united. The maenads of Thebes, individuals bound to one another but alienated from themselves; and the isolated Pentheus, a king whose role it is to "hold together the house" and the *polis*, finally a body torn apart and a destroyer of his own household, vividly realize the consequences of the negative of that ideal. Dionysus makes manifest the problem of human desire in the spectacle of resistance and its gradual dissipation. The irresistible god makes manifest the absolute, determining importance of the quality of human desiring, its great power and terrible weakness. He brings into vivid relief agency and its nature, which alone would potentially preserve and healthily nurture mortals for a good life, for *eudaimonia*.

The second, related aspect of the twofold ambition of this study is an exploration of the difficult question of person or personhood. This is the ontological quality of the being with the *potential* for agency, entangled in a complex social world with others "like self". This world is defined among other things by its radical subjection to time and succession. The person is marked by the possession of memory, and by the sense of a future – a biographical conception of itself. Conscious humans synthesize different events and moments in time, binding them together into what we call a life, *bios*, from which we infer the qualities of a character. Person and identity is a fundamental theme of *Bacchae*, a play in which the recognition, mistaking, loss, transformation and regaining of identities form the very stuff of the plot. If a division between "agent" and "person" is not always strictly adhered to, that is

because there is an organic interpenetration of these two properties in human beings. Interpretation needs to be commensurately flexible, as far as that is coherently possible[22].

Bacchae presents human life as an ethical and an ontological riddle. Like the riddle of the Sphinx at Thebes, this one concerns the identity and shape of the human subject, a changing profile in time and over time. As with the Sphinx's riddle, its manner of solving will be determining for the existence of the self and the *polis*. "What do I wish for?" asks Menelaus, in *Iphigenia at Aulis*[23]: he is a protagonist who undergoes a radical transformation in his desires during that play. What the Thebans have wished for and failed to wish for, and failed to *authentically* wish for, will be the cause of their downfall in *Bacchae*. "What do I desire?" is a question prior even to the question that Snell found to be defining for drama: *ti drasō?* "what do I do?". But what is a person if it is made up or inferred from such properties as desires, thoughts, talk and acts, which are immaterial, constantly slipping into the virtual world of the past – *cedit et succedit* – inaccessible, and therefore hard to shape and govern?

Pentheus is told that he is not what he thinks he is; we are told that Dionysus is not the form he has taken, nor even the "man's nature" that he has put on[24]. Kadmos and Harmonia will lose their anthropic form, becoming snakes but retaining their human identities, and ultimately join the society of the Blessed Ones. A man is not a head or a mask. He is not a body that can be transformed into a serpent or stag, as Actaeon was, or shockingly reduced to an object, or even abject matter, scattered on the earth. Physical form cannot be said to really constitute the person. Thought is not object as matter is, it has not the stability or permanence of things, and person is not co-extensive with the body. Human person is neither body nor mind but the *co-presence,* or society, of body and mind. It is something more like the relationship by which the local, particular and unique is connected to that which can seem to stand outside of space-time, viz. the mind, (but which is really always one interpenetrated dimension of an entangled, historical reality *in* space and time). Person is more like an environment, a shifting context of relation, one that is imperfectly served by too neat a dichotomy of "subject" and "object".

A person, the identity of others, is *hard to locate*. One thing it must be, is *in time*. A person is not the act of a moment or what is said in one instance (although the only way we experience historical persons is in a succession of instances). Instead, a person is some

[22] I have, furthermore, introduced other scholarship, such as that of Stewart Guthrie on the "detection of agents", for example, that does not make this distinction or for which the ethical dimension of agency is not at issue.

[23] Eur. *IA* 485: τί βούλομαι γάρ; see below p. 126 § 2.7 n. 324 and p. 197 § 3.3.8 n. 252; and the contrast with Snell, 1928: 1-33, on the defining tragic question being "*ti drasō?*", "What shall I do?".

[24] 53-4: ὧν οὕνεκ' εἶδος θνητὸν ἀλλάξας ἔχω / μορφήν τ' ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν.

property we infer, *stretched over* time. Personhood is something inferred, produced by interpretation; not a phenomenon straightforwardly registered or perceived. Like agency it is not easy to demonstrate objectively, since it is a property of the subjectivity of subjects, their being self-reflexive, their having the consciousness of "self" the way that all beings are conscious of external objects. We react to and see narrative and dramatic fictions as persons, as subjects, just as we, subjects of our own experience, can look upon ourselves as objects.

Characters on stage are persons, although they are clearly only *virtual* identities. They are fungible: different actors can play them, they are not attached to specific, singular bodies. Gods are persons; we think and speak of them and relate to them as such. In "art situations", such as in the theatre, we begin to understand the fictive character of *all* persons, not only those imaginative creations of poetry, but also historical persons. The society of persons, or *Lebenswelt,* is made up of: those with us, co-present; those alive but absent, our contemporaries; our predecessors, the dead and the previous generation moving closer to death; and the not yet born or matured, our successors. And in Greek poetry it is a special kind of person, inspired with a very Apollonian or Dionysiac power[25] – *mania mantikē*[26] – who has the sensitivity to apprehend the meanings of the preceding, current and succeeding world of persons: τά τ' ἐόντα τά τ' ἐσσόμενα πρό τ' ἐόντα[27].

Gods, characters in drama, the dead: we might call these *effective persons*, for living humans relate with these virtual beings as if they were *there.* They are virtual, however, lacking something in common: they are not *in time,* they are not *there* in the way that historical persons are there, having a *densité de présence*. Human historical persons are tragically subject to contingency and time, to a constant unfolding. You can hold humans in your arms and they will be responsive, to put it simply. When a loved one dies, as in *Bacchae*, and their body is held in one's arms, one is mournful, for this responsiveness is extinct; one cannot have a relationship of mutuality any longer, the loved one is no longer subject to time. Personhood is not co-extensive with the body, its apprehending is not always contingent on fullest presence; it is shared in common with beings that need not exist in the common historical sense of "existent". A visiting ghost will be, effectively, the person. But a ghost is not in space-time as an historical person is. Representations, idols, art works, memory, apparitions, gods – these are very often effective as persons, but insufficient for a fully reciprocal relation marked by the defining condition of historical persons, which is the *ad hoc*

[25] 298-9: μάντις δ' ὁ δαίμων ὅδε· τὸ γὰρ βακχεύσιμον/ καὶ τὸ μανιῶδες μαντικὴν πολλὴν ἔχει·

[26] Notwithstanding Plato's schema of the division of forms of *mania*, in which to Apollo belongs prophetic inspiration and to his brother Dionysus the *telestic,* Pl. *Phdr.* 265b 2-4: Τῆς δὲ θείας τεττάρων θεῶν τέτταρα μέρη διελόμενοι, μαντικὴν μὲν ἐπίπνοιαν Ἀπόλλωνος θέντες, Διονύσου δὲ τελεστικήν. In Tragedy Dionysus is often explicitly linked with the prophetic, *mantikē*, powers.

[27] Hom. *Il.* 1.70, the human *Lebenswelt* with its definingly temporal, successive character; a past, present and future, with which the *mantis* Kalchas is familiar.

character of their experience, their subjection to time and its perpetual shifting and uncertainty. This historical personhood – physical proximity and the mutuality of co-presence in space and time – is the condition which one might call *sufficient personhood*. Whatever it is, it seems a riddle underlying or overshadowing the events of *Bacchae*. This study is an exploration of its significance and the manner in which it invests the work with such an electric, enigmatic quality of something as if alive, as if, indeed, a person.

Among other things, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* is a Tragedy in which a super-natural being solicits a son for vengeance.[28] The son cannot be sure of the nature or identity of the spirit. With the young Danish prince this doubtfulness of the phantom's true identity, its being *apistos* or *adēlotēs*, becomes a pretext or opportunity for elaborate and quite astonishing reflections on the nature of personhood *an sich*, the nature of mortality and the relationship between imagination and reality. Moments in *Bacchae* recall the scene in *Hamlet*, where the prince addresses Yorick's skull[29]. What was Yorick ever that his japes and gibes still echo through the mind, while Yorick the historical man is reduced to bones, a skull apostrophized so pathetically *as if* the person? When Kadmos addresses the mask of Pentheus, he addresses a future, only virtual Pentheus, who, after the young king's violent death, will not be there in future, as he is not "here" in Kadmos' present[30]. Pentheus is reduced, like Yorick or Alexander the Great[31], to sheer matter and this is absolute *aporia*, perplexing the mind out of thought.

Here is a strange, impenetrable enigma of existence, one seeming to thwart logic: persons are matter and some quality animating matter, some quality of mind and desire and mindless vitality and pre-rational urge. The body is *empsuchos* and it becomes *apsuchos*, and this is definitive: being alive is being internally self-moving, having this minimal autonomy. What persons are looks very like language, those contents that more or less stream out of them. It is not, however, exhausted by language or consciousness, "words, words, words", as the bookish, young *tyrannos* of Elsinore put it aporetically. The presence of other persons, which can be so troublesome, and their absence, which can be so sorrowful, mean a great deal to human persons, who are nothing if not social. Yet they have this fictional texture and they are opaque. Humans are instinctive and thoughtful, thoughtless and calculating, inspired and imprudent. They are defined by their unique articulacy and the tragic

[28] In more obvious ways it recalls Orestes and his Horatio, Pylades, tormented by nightmares and sleeplessness; hater of a usurper, having a treacherous mother and being pursued by phantoms, inexorably to a dubious revenge.

[29] Shakespeare *Ham.* 5.1.

[30] As Agamemnon in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (performed alongside *Bacchae,* also 405 BCE) pathetically addresses a projected, dying daughter (who is in fact not yet being killed, only absent), and a pathetic, crying infant Orestes and faraway Helen and Paris. Eur. *IA* 462-8.

[31] Shakespeare *Ham.* 5.1. 202-4: To what base uses we may return, Horatio! Why may/ not imagination trace the noble dust of Alexander, / till he find it stopping a bung-hole?

muteness of their desires, and by a blindness when they turn their minds upon themselves. *Bacchae* does not solve these profound problems, but it certainly raises them *as* problems.

This study will brush against some difficult and central philosophical problems. The late 5th Century was a time when many of the questions that endured for millennia as the central riddles of a thinking person's life were first formulated as philosophy, as problems and questions with answers worth pursuing, however unattainable. The 20th Century was a time in which humans became redefined as psychological subjects, but also objects of historical or structural forces. In Classics, the last century has been a time of re-exploration of the ritual, mystical and irrational aspects of Tragedy, especially in this drama of the god Dionysus. But *Bacchae* is a set of questions deliberately opened up and they are not neatly resolved. The nature of these is self-consciously philosophical, a complex seeking after *sophia*. Whatever that may be, it is not limited to a cognitive property of persons, and cannot be subsumed by the categories of rationalist philosophizing.

Humans define themselves through relationships, but these are impalpable and unstable. Things matter to humans, but *why* they should do so and what ought to matter, is terminally uncertain. Humans are intensely social but hard to get on with. They wish to be recognized by others, but what it is that is being recognized and who deserves highest recognition is changing, unclear and disputed. What is a person that its ability to recognize itself and be recognized as such by others comes and goes, is not a given? What is the difference between mortal persons and immortal ones, and is the defining quality of mortal persons their impressive rational capacity or their insuperable mortality, their being in time? Humans are marked by their having desires, deliberating, judging and choosing or failing to do so. They feel sometimes powerful and effective and other times the playthings of forces they cannot understand. Their desires and emotions feel sometimes their own – governed from within, *endothen* – and other times as if external forces – *exōthen* – own *them*. All of these questions and problems are implicated in the events of *Bacchae*.

Perhaps the greatest paradox in this thoroughly ironic and paradoxical context is that human identity, personhood and agency are seen to be somehow constituted of the same stuff as fiction. It partakes, somehow, of the imaginative fabric, thread by the flying hands of mind. There is no self, in one *realistic* sense. There is no part of humans that survives time and its entropy, unless it is fictive. Transcendent beings or transcendent parts are purely notional. And yet, nothing *is* more real, nothing *more* valuable to humans, nothing more determining for their lives, its quality and significance, than these intractably immaterial *fictions*. Fictions are not real in an objective, demonstrable, measurable sense, and yet nothing is more *efficacious* than the identities, values and *effectively* transcendent persons that

the human mind both discovers and projects; the persons and personhood with which the world is so richly populated.

I have not set out to, nor will we solve any philosophical problems in the course of this study of *Bacchae*, but I hope to show that, not merely a reflection of ritual practices nor only a social ritual to bring cathartic relief or a feeling of civic solidarity, *Bacchae* is a living fiction and its identity is, strange as it may sound, like that of a *person*. It engages and is engaged. We may personify it and say that it *has* desires, it *makes* judgements and it *engages* us as persons, as subjects that also judge and choose and reflect. Like Dionysus as a mask hung on a shaft in the Anthesteria, or as with his initiates in *Bacchae*, it "sees being seen"; it watches us, knowing it is itself being watched, as it transmits its special knowledge: ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα, καὶ δίδωσιν ὄργια, 470. We *know* it by inference, and interpret it *into life,* so to speak, in the same way that we only ever know that elusive property, the identity of person. It has values. Exactly like the private rituals, *orgia*, of Dionysus, which "hate the man who practises impiety" – ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ' ὄργι' ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ, 476 – Attic dramas, these ancestral *teletai*, public rituals[32], have the quality of human persons: they lay claims, interact, have sense and make judgements. *Bacchae* makes value judgements, it evaluates other persons, modifies how we read its own predecessors and successors, and summons a certain quality of evaluativeness from its spectators.

1.3 Views on Agency and Personhood: Was soll werden?

In this section I briefly sketch the development of perspectives on the Greek views of self, agent and person in the 20th Century. When agency was discussed by Classicists in the last hundred years or so, it was largely as a topic in the philosophy of free will and individual autonomy. Normative notions on the subject, derived from Cartesian, Kantian and vestigially Christian views of the self, governed assumptions among many of the earlier interpreters of Greek poetry in this period. Until the 1970s a view of "progress", development or gradual "Entdeckung" in Greek views of agency and person dominated. Bruno Snell and Arthur Adkins are representative of this assessment of the history of Greek culture as a development from supposedly more primitive forms to more recognizably modern, complex notions of the self as a unique individual having depth. Such notions allegedly begin to be discerned in Attic Drama, by the beginning of the 5th Century[33]. The unspoken philosophical bias motivating these assumptions is articulated by Jean-Pierre

[32] Cf. Ar. *Ran.* 368: κωμῳδηθεὶς ἐν ταῖς πατρίοις τελεταῖς ταῖς τοῦ Διονύσου, "Ridiculed in the ancestral rites [*patriois teletais*] of Dionysus."

[33] Snell, 1928, 1930, 1955. Adkins, 1960, 1970.

Vernant and later, more elaborately, by Christopher Gill[34]. They, especially the latter, aim to correct the imbalances in the analysis of the subject in Greek thought and poetry introduced by an under-theorized or simply normative, modern notion of the self, against which Greek conceptions have been implicitly and distortingly measured.

In this study I seek to further develop the task of articulating an interpretation commensurate with the tragic poet's own views of agency and personhood, rather than applying unexpressed Enlightenment, anti-Enlightenment or post-Enlightenment assumptions to the reading of the work. An important theme of the play is desire and its relationship with knowledge. *Bacchae* complicates the identity of the subject of desires, the subject of knowledge and the true and only apparent objects of these, in sophisticated ways. I study the problems of desire, passion, decision and the articulacy of the self in *Bacchae* by the light of the philosophies of agency found in Aristotle and in the contemporary work of Charles Taylor.

Nevertheless, the fundamental premise of this work is that we require not only a more nuanced, less anachronistic, approach to the question of the self and its agency, from the point of view of philosophy, but that our implicit and explicit anthropology of the human subject and its *Lebenswelt* will be determining for the answers we finally arrive at. *Bacchae*, as will be shown, challenges our views, not only on personal freedom and choice, but on the identity of persons, their relationship with language, the nature of divine persons as opposed to mortal, and our manner of knowing other persons and ourselves. We may say that in the play we have the opportunity to discern what the necessary elements or conditions of agency and personhood are, what elements will qualify for an effective or socially and cognitively competent personhood, and what would constitute *sufficient* personhood in the Dionysiac context. "Sufficient" here means adequate or commensurate with the peculiar completeness called for by Dionysus, which is not presence of mind but the co-presence of mind with body, wholesomely integrated with feeling and a healthy kind of desiring, which is itself a desiring for health and wholeness.

The purpose of this book then is to study *Bacchae* closely, cognizant of the philosophical premises that will shape our sketch of the work, and to bind together the outlines of a "silhouette of an anthropology of the tragic subject"[35], such as we discover in Euripides' play. The view of agency and person taken here is not confined to, or even primarily, the traditional philosophical one, nor does it adopt the position of criticism seeking to "counteract" traditional views, taken by Gill and Vernant. The great interest in this study

[34] Vernant, in Vernant & Vidal-Nacquet, 1972; Gill, 1986, 1990, 1996, 2006.

[35] Cf. Gell, 1998: 10-11.

will be seen not in the question of subjectivity understood in terms of autonomy or free will, or of subjectivity versus objectivity, but in terms of the anthropological posture taken by a Greek poet on the human subject as, in time, forming part of a *Lebenswelt*; being intersubjective; being a container concealing insides, *phrenes*; being more or less competent as a social actor; being embodied; being born, impulsive, articulate, communicating; feeling communicated with; consuming, expelling, dying; and, definingly, feeling *concern* in all manner of ways.

Freud famously defined the project of psychoanalysis with the Delphically resounding utterance: "Wo Es war, soll Ich werden."[36] Such is the therapeutic task of psychology, to identify and illuminate the hidden causes and motivations of psychic life. The Freudian *telos* is to cure disorder, so far as that may be possible, by turning the concealed objects shaping psychic life into the recognized and handled elements of a subject's more articulated self. Freud employs scientific method towards an ethical, human end: personal wholeness through examination of the self. The project of Claude Lévi-Strauss can in certain lights seem to have been the very reverse of Freud's, in its negation of the individual subject and any kind of personal agency and *Ich*[37]. The most influential figure in 20th Century anthropology had little patience for the privileging of individual subjectivity in the analysis of culture. *Par excellence*, he embodies the scientific, objectivist impulse in the modern study of human culture. He "hated" phenomenology and the "shopgirl's metaphysics" – "une sorte de métaphysique pour midinette" – of existentialism, repudiating the subject and its personal, affective experience as having no heuristic value[38]. In the final paragraphs of his great memoir he paraphrases Pascale[39], writing famously: "Le moi n'est pas seulement haïssable: il n'a pas de place entre nous et rien."[40]

[36] In the semester of 1916/17, in lectures he delivered at the Viennesse Psychiatric Clinic, Freud famously defined the objective of psychoanalysis as follows: "Ihre Absicht ist ja, das Ich zu stärken, es vom Über-Ich unabhängiger zu machen, sein Wahrnehmungsfeld zu erweitern und seine Organisation auszubauen, so daß es sich neue Stücke des Es aneignen kann. Wo Es war, soll Ich werden." (Freud, 1933 *Neue Folge der Vorlesungen zur Einführung in die Psychoanalyse*).

[37] Although, in fact, Freud was a Diotima to the young anthropologist, Freudian psychology was one of Lévi-Strauss' earliest and formative *maîtresses*, along with Marx and geology. See Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 52-64 "Comment on devient ethnologue".

[38] Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 61.

[39] Pascale in his *Pensées* § 597 [ed. Lafuma] had written "Le moi est haïssable. Ainsi ceux qui ne l'ôtent pas, et qui se contentent seulement de le couvrir, sont toujours haïssables." In Pascale, the motivation is Christian selflessness, the rejection of egocentrism. Nevertheless, that is perhaps a true antecedent of the selflessness of modern, scientific objectivism.

[40] Lévi-Strauss, 1955: 496. Cf. Shatz, 2011: "Lévi-Strauss saw himself as a spiritual medium more than an author. 'I don't have the feeling that I write my books,' he said. 'I have the feeling that my books get written through me . . . I never had, and still do not have, the perception of feeling my personal identity.' In *Tristes Tropiques*, his memoir of his fieldwork among the Indians of Brazil, he called the self 'hateful'. Everything he wrote aimed to puncture the notions of will and agency that cluster around the human subject. The critique of the subject was central to structuralism."

Although the self was Freud's defined object of study and attention, and that may seem to be as absolute a privileging or affirmation as there may be, Freud's work is decidedly not metaphysical or romantic (on the face of it), nor in its clinical ambitions can it be impugned as denying objective scientific method. The implications of Freud's work, especially his structuring of the self and defining of the ineradicable and fundamental character of the unconscious, have, like those of Lévi-Strauss' work, been adapted in various ways by Classical scholars. The position taken by interpreters with respect to first-order objectivism or *explanation*, on the one hand; and with respect to second-order, subjective experience or *interpretation*, on the other, will be determining for the conclusions they draw. The broad trend in recent times may be crudely described as an increasingly determined resolution to apply to Greek texts and culture the objective criteria of the sciences; to identify where a distorting, normative view of the self as transcendent or outside of history has coloured interpretation and method, and to correct that. In philology, as in most humanistic disciplines, the prestige of scientific method and the relativizing of "the subject" both as category and as absolute value, have served to displace the traditional Enlightenment view, which defined unspoken parameters for understanding the self until at least the Second World War.

The view of Ancient Greek culture, and in particular Greek religion and its Dionysiac expression, has also been shaped by the assumptions of late 19th Century anthropology, such as are found in the work of Tylor and Frazer (and also in Robertson Smith's and Durkheim's work on cult and religion)[41]. Tylor and Frazer were informed by the ethnological outlook on supposedly primitive cultures taken by Western culture of the time. Assumptions about the primitive versus the modern have been decisive for positions taken with regard to Ancient Greek culture and religious practice; for the ways in which these are spoken of, celebrated and explained. Jane Harrison, Francis Cornford and Gilbert Murray (when it comes to Dionysus and *Bacchae*, especially Murray) played an important role in establishing a new science of ritual-functionalism as the interpretive frame through which to understand Tragedy and its god[42]. This interpretive posture would find its most sophisticated and persuasive permutation in the body of work produced by Walter Burkert from 1960 until the early 21st Century.

The work of Freud clearly constitutes the most important revolution in the view of the human subject of the early 20th Century. Frazer and the Frazerian elements of the so-called Cambridge Ritual School quickly became obsolete with the emergence of Malinowski's new,

[41] On anthropology and the tradition of classical philology, see Schlesier, 1994. For a comprehensive account of the development of the view of the subject in anthropology, see Morris, 2014.

[42] Harrison, 1922, 1927; Murray, 1906, 1913, 1955.

scientific anthropology and Durkheim's sociology of religion[43]. But the ritualism of Murray and Harrison received new life and a cutting-edge Freudian boost from the scholar whose work has been most definitive for the interpretation of *Bacchae* since 1945, E.R. Dodds[44]. If Nietzsche has enjoyed the most enduringly popular influence on the conception of Dionysus for people who study Greek, since the publication of his dithyrambic *Die Geburt der Tragödie* in 1872, it is Dodds whose work has been most important, both through the text, commentary and interpretive essay of his 1944 edition (updated in 1960), and through his seminal *The Greeks and the Irrational*, 1951 (which is dedicated to Murray).

Dodds' work and spirit may be said effectively to have displaced that of Otto. Otto's *Dionysos* (1933) is rich in insights but resolutely unscientific, ahistorical and symbolist, a rejection of anthropology, the new "science of man", and its application to Greek culture. Everything following Dodds' work, however, must reckon with it. His influence is everywhere, but perhaps most effectively transmitted through the major studies that followed his and further disseminated his views. Other works, as much as his own, have established the 'Doddsian' as the mainstream reading[45]. *Bacchae* would become fairly well established as a reflection of cult, a kind of impersonal vehicle of belief and practice and an expression of psycho-social function. According to this reading was most significantly determined not by any given subjective outlook, nor was it a study in individual character, but served rather to smooth away individual difference, in a way to make subjects "thyrsus-bearers", the carriers of objects and objective cultural and historical resources or, in the case of Pentheus, a kind of blockage in the waterworks of a properly functioning psychological system of libidinal reticulation. Any question of the individual agent or problems of subjectivity and interpretation had effectively been circumvented; they simply had no bearing here. *Bacchae* reflected collective life and its doings, having little to do with individuals: it in fact enacted the effacement of individuality. Hence the play becomes a resource in the history of "Dionysiac religion", "Maenadism", and a kind of re-established ritualism with Freudian overtones[46].

[43] Frazer, unlike the fieldworker Malinowski, was essentially an armchair scholar, his sources being often colonial ethnological reports of questionable or uneven scientific value. On Frazer and the "Cambridge Ritualists", see Ackerman, 2002.

[44] On Dodds' Freudian assumptions, a tacit psychology of *Bacchae*, (Dodds, editor of the canonical modern edition "offers no explicit affiliation to a body of theoretical material"), see Goldhill in Easterling, 1987 (the quote here from 342-3).

[45] As, for example, through Jeanmaire, 1951 on Dionysus and his cult; Adkins' very influential works on related questions in Greek culture and its interpretation, 1960, 1970; on *Bacchae* Roux, 1972; on the origins of tragedy and on Greek religion generally, Burkert 1966, 1972, 1977; and on the reading of *Bacchae* in terms of ritual, Seaford, 1996; Di Benedetto, 2004.

[46] On "maenadism" and Dionysiac religiosity, see for example Jeanmaire, 1951; Dodds, 1940, 1951; Henrichs, 1969, 1978; Bremmer, 1984; Goff, 2004; and Schlesier's "Der bakchische Gott" in Schlesier: 173-202.

Richard Seaford remains one of the most important recent contributors to scholarship on Dionysus, and *Bacchae* in particular. Amongst *Dionysosforscher* he also represents the most complete realization of the ritualism or neo-ritualism in which personhood or agency is displaced by ritual patterning: a morphological approach that has something in common with the pattern-recognitions of structuralism and post-structuralism, but showing a great commitment to the local and historical evidence, rather than trying to force that evidence into conformity with the universal. His work was contemporary with that of Charles Segal, who could stand well for the fullest realization of the structuralist and post-structuralist permutation of the interpretation of *Bacchae*[47]. Segal's most important work on *Bacchae* was the exhaustive study *Dionysiac Poetics and Euripides' "Bacchae"* (1997 [1982]), which will perhaps be most remembered for its adept introduction into the interpretation of the play of contemporary literary theory and the influential idea of its "metatheatrical" qualities.

The crucial point here is that any interpretation finding the play to be a study in *ēthos* or the nature of the good and the good life, or an ethical judgement of the divinity – which in the earlier 20th Century had been fairly common – has largely disappeared in the interests of a more objectivist kind of approach. It has been replaced by interpretation of the play as the expression of scientifically analysable psychological conditions, sociologically or functionally explicable rituals, or systematically classifiable structures of signification. Thus, interpretation of *Bacchae* can be said to recapitulate the rhythms of the broader trends in intellectual culture.

The disappearance of the ethical agent as the subject of interpretation of a cultural work such as a Greek tragedy will not necessarily make that interpretation automatically more *objective*. Such a strategy also has *its* place in a history of methodologies and views of the subject; it is not the culmination of a slow approach to truth, but itself entails a value judgement and may, like all things, be historicized, i.e. relativized. Explanation is not *a priori* more valid than interpretation[48]. The prestige of science is no more an absolute value embraced by all than is the romantic conception of the autonomous, self-determining and coherent individual. These were the kinds of things being argued, as I see it, by such scholars as Griffin, Friedrich and Scullion, who expressed reservations about the "neo-ritualist" posture of scholars like Richard Seaford and, perhaps indirectly, of Burkert. As Scullion put it in an essay that deserves to be more influential, Tragedy has been largely "misconceived as ritual"[49].

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[47] Seaford, 1981, 1987, 1994, 1996. Segal, 1997 [1982].

[48] See Lawson & McCauley, 1990: esp. 12-31, on interpretation versus explanation in the interpretation of religion.

[49] Griffin, 1988; Friedrich, 1983, 2000; and Seaford's responses to their criticisms, Seaford, 2000a, 2000b; Scullion, 2002.

We might usefully isolate four most influential and representative scholars, spread nearly evenly over time, who have explicitly handled the delicate questions of agency and person in Greek Tragedy in the last century: Bruno Snell, Arthur Adkins, Jean-Pierre Vernant and Christopher Gill. In between the milestone works of these individuals, there come the many other interpreters from whom scholarship on the subject has richly benefitted[50]. Bruno Snell's earliest work focused on Greek terms for knowledge[51]. In 1928 he published *Aischylos und das Handeln im Drama*, treating questions of action and the psychology of volition in drama. While, as the title declares, his main subject is Aeschylus, in his opening chapters he offers a most Hegelian syllogistic and *geistesgeschichtliche* description of the biography of the Greek *Ich,* from the *thesis* of Homer, through the *antithesis* of Lyric to the *synthesis* of Drama. He combined the etymological or 'lexical method' with a view of history as unfolding Spirit. Thirty years later Adkins, a student of Dodds, would work on the basis of a somewhat similar, normative view of the nature of the subject and its agency; one that assumed a development to increasing sophistication or completeness over time. This residually romantic notion of the self gives its own shape to the Greek material studied. Such a normative view of development towards consummation, it should perhaps be said, is at least as old as Aristotle, who thought of Tragedy as itself arising out of the *ad hoc* and developing into its perfect form[52].

The *locus classicus* for modern discussions of agency in Greek Tragedy is Vernant's essay 'Ébauches de la volonté dans la tragédie grecque', 1972. Vernant's objective there was to historicize the premises, often unspoken, which characterize many previous discussions of agency and the will in tragedy. He sought to show that much confusion derives from an anachronistic misreading of Aristotle on ethics and misapplication of the later idea of "free will" as philosophical problem. Vernant approvingly reads André Rivier's 1968 essay, which argues against the modern, humanistic underappreciation of the objective realities that divine beings in fact represented for the Greeks[53]. Both look back critically to Snell's 1928 work on Aeschylus and together mark an important divergence from his path and the beginning of a re-assertion of the objective view that the Greeks themselves took on personhood – mortal and divine – and that modern interpreters ought similarly to take on ancient culture.

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[50] Notably, for example, Garton, 1957, Lesky, 1960, 1966; Dawe, 1963; Easterling, 1973; Gould, 1978.

[51] Snell, 1922: *Die Ausdrücke Für den Begriff des Wissens in der Vorplatonischen Philosophie*. One of his latest works took up this theme in the form of a response to Dodds' *The Greeks and the Irrational,* see Snell, 1973: "Wie die Griechen lernten, was geistige Tätigkeit ist".

[52] Aristotle described Tragedy itself as a development from something rudimentary, through stages, to a settled perfection in which it realized its true nature, *phusis*, from which there could be no further development, see Arist. *Poet.* 1449a 14-15: καὶ πολλὰς μεταβολὰς μεταβαλοῦσα ἡ τραγῳδία ἐπαύσατο, ἐπεὶ ἔσχε τὴν αὑτῆς φύσιν.

[53] Rivier, 1968, see also his treatment of the theme of the super-natural in Euripides, Rivier, 1960.

An essential difference between Snell on the one hand and Vernant on the other might be expressed in how they premise time and change. Snell's work is explicitly shaped by a Hegelian historiography of spiritual development through thesis, antithesis and synthesis. Vernant's approach is conditioned by the materialist historiography, which had previously shaped Durkheim's sociological reading of ritual; by Braudel's historiography of *la longue durée*; by Louis Gernet's historical reading of Greek legal conceptions of imputability, agency and person; and by Ignace Meyerson's project to describe a historical psychology[54]. On the one hand, time is a spiritual unfolding, on the other it is the dialectical transformation of objective, material conditions.

The most important work of recent times on questions of personhood, the self, and the interpretation of the human subject, as conceived both in Greek culture and by modern scholars, is Christopher Gill's *Personality in Greek Epic, Tragedy, and Philosophy: The Self in Dialogue*, 1996[55]. This comprehensively covers much of the theoretical ground which forms the background to the problem of objective and subjective views of personhood. Like Vernant before him, Gill revisits Snell and Adkins and holds them up as examples of a philosophically undertheorized, normative view of human persons, one that has the outlines of a Kantian, Enlightenment conception of the individual as a unified being with certain defining potentialities. But Gill's work is an in-depth study, as opposed to Vernant's essay (rich and lengthy as that is), and therefore comparatively extensive. The ambition of Vernant, one may say, was a salutary historicizing of categories and a making explicit of the values expressed by the judgements taken on the question of the agent and the freedom of its will in Tragedy. Gill's project is essentially philosophical but reposes on the same desire as Vernant's, viz. to offer a corrective to any too unreflective conceptualization and privileging of the subject as object of analysis or as prize of civilizational development.

Gill discusses some key passages in Homer that had been used by Snell and Adkins to illustrate their arguments on Homeric views of psychology, the identity of person and the qualified imputability to it of its acts[56]. He discusses personality in Plato and Aristotle at length. When it comes to tragedy, his focus is mostly on that complex dramatic creation of Euripides, Medea. He does not introduce Dionysus or *Bacchae* into his discussion. *Bacchae* rather complicates the rationalist, Aristotelian view of Gill, and yet it is essential to any discussion of self and personhood in tragedy, as I hope to demonstrate. Chiara Thumiger's 2007 *Hidden Paths – Self & Characterization in Greek Tragedy: Euripides' "Bacchae"*, is a monograph devoted to related questions in Euripides' play. Her valuable contribution to the

[54] Durkheim, 1912; Braudel, 1998; Meyerson, 1948; Gernet, 1968.

[55] Anticipated in the 1986 article, "The Question of Character and Personality in Greek Tragedy", Gill, 1986.

[56] I treat these passages in detail in my own forthcoming study, *Agency in Greek Tragedy*.

study of *Bacchae* is more concerned with rather more literary conceptions of character and self and their interpretation than is the case in the present study, which is focused on developing an anthropology of the tragic subject as a creature having value and concerns on one hand and on the other a peculiar and determining ontic character of *personhood* – or whatever we ought to call it, τὴν καρδίαν γὰρ ἢ ψυχὴν ἢ ὅτι δεῖ αὐτὸ ὀνομάσαι[57].

Gill is interested in "the *norms* of personality and selfhood" expressed in Greek thought and their relationship to "equivalent modern norms"[58]. He sets out to combine "the exploration of Greek thinking about selfhood and personality with the re-examination of our own ideas on this subject", to critically reappraise leading ideas of both ancient and modern thought and to encourage a new respect for Greek ideas, showing their relevance afresh[59]. He rejects the developmental, *geistesgeschichtliches* view of Snell and Adkins, his own work being a "reaction" against that, and he recognizes that he has this in common with structural anthropologists though does not discuss their methods[60]. He certainly shared this revisional or corrective reaction with Vernant, who was a most sophisticated and critical reader of the work of Lévi-Strauss, setting an example to a generation of scholars of how to exploit structuralism to gain new insights into ancient Greek culture[61].

Gill adduces contemporary philosophy of mind in the work of Wilkes, and of ethics in that of Macintyre and Williams to support his critical position. He submits to rigorous analysis and evaluation the usefulness of the Cartesian, post-Cartesian and Kantian models of the subject as coherent "I"; a unitary, full person; having a continuous identity; autonomy and agency. These had been the dominant, ultimately normative views of personhood throughout most of the modern period[62]. As he summarizes Wilkes' critique of Cartesian orthodoxy[63]:

> . . . the Cartesian and post-Cartesian models of mind and personhood are overly *subjective* and *subjectivist* in two related ways. (1) They give a privileged status to the idea of the 'subject', the 'I' as seat of self-consciousness; and (2) they give a similarly privileged status to the subjective (especially first-personal) perspective in their accounts of our access to, and knowledge of, human psychology.

[57] To borrow from Alcibiades in the *Symposium* Pl. *Sym.* 218a.

[58] Gill, 1996: 2.

[59] Gill, 1996: 4.

[60] Gill, 1996: 5.

[61] See Vernant, in Buxton 2000; and Vernant, 1974, esp. "Raisons du mythe": 195-250

[62] Wilkes, 1988; MacIntyre, 1985; Williams, 1985.

[63] Gill, 1996: 6.

Wilkes and others argue that the notion of 'the subject' is unhelpful, the mind better understood as "for instance the interplay between psychological parts or functions". A third-person mode of enquiry would be best suited for this undertaking. This is an argument for a scientific, "objectivist account of our knowledge of human psychology".[64] Wilkes' criticism of the first-person view of the individual as unitary consciousness, "I", entails a critique not simply of the psychology of knowledge, but of the ontology of person as I see it.

The picture we discover in a work like *Bacchae* is such that we should be wary of assuming that personhood is ever entirely subsumed in the *mental* life of a person, in its consciousness and unconsciousness, however that is conceptualized, whether unitary or interactive. It may be ambiguous and indefinite, occasionally contradicted, but it is strongly suggested in *Bacchae* that *embodied* identity – the simultaneous presence of both body and mind – alone provides the sufficient conditions of fullest personhood. Where Gill focuses on the nature of the conscious and its central role in self, I shall be more concerned with the ontic dimensions of mind and embodiment and the complicated way these are seen in *Bacchae* to constitute aspects of persons and beings *in time*, having both a virtual, mental character and a physical dimension. *Bacchae*, amongst other things, is a play that problematizes the self and its identity. Personhood here is "not easily located": οὐ ῥάιδιον ζήτημα, 1139.

As Wilkes critiques Cartesian over-privileging of the subject and subjectivity, so analogously did MacIntyre and Williams challenge the validity of Kant's notion of the moral agent and its capacity for "self-legislation" or for an idealized autonomy[65]:

> Both MacIntyre and Williams argue that moral (or rather ethical) life should be understood primarily in terms of the development of dispositions by full-hearted engagement in the value-bearing practices, roles, and modes of relationship of a specific society.

Once again, the critical view taken by those philosophers and endorsed by Gill, is that the Kantian and post-Kantian views are too centred on the sovereign individual, (such an ideal of "man" is really a more mythical person than the life-like, time-bound and faulty persons of Greek myth and drama). They argue for a more realistic view of persons as caught up in "interpersonal and communal relationships". Engagement or participation has a central role in ethical life and the formation of ethical ideals[66]. What Gill calls "engagement" and

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[64] Gill, 1996: 6-7.

[65] Gill, 1996: 7.

[66] Gill, 1996: 8-9.

"participation" in "communal relationships" finds expression in the current study of *Bacchae* as "intersubjectivity" – *homilia* – "forms of life", "the *polis*" and the "public domain". For a study of Greek Tragedy cannot really avoid the fact that persons are conceived there as they in fact always are: definitively social beings, creatures of relation and "talk". Sociality is not one aspect of the life of individuals; it is constitutive of persons *qua* subjects.

Bacchae represents a re-assessment of identities and of personhood, setting the isolated individual as a negative ideal against precisely 'the development of dispositions by full-hearted engagement in the value-bearing practices, roles, and modes of relationship of a specific society'. But this is not a world only of discourse and conceptions, of established *nomoi* and forms of life, but of their origin and establishment out of the opaque recesses of human life and its psychology in all its uncanniness. It is a world not only of reason but of such immeasurables as a *sophia*, which is perpetually other than what mortals have thought. The Dionysiac context is one of *charis* – human or savage or divine[67] – and of the healthy *mania* of inspiration. It is a richly textured, dynamic cosmos not of stable *idea* and its discursive interpretation[68], but of *phainomena* and *phusis*: *sōma*, body, *chrōs*, flesh, *morhpai*, shapes, sensation, charisma and a kind of profoundest *esprit de corps* and joyfulness, *euphrosynē*. These are not easily susceptible to reasonable accounting, arising in the animal co-presence of embodied beings.

Gill's proposal in view of the historical, interpretive problems he identified, consisted of a synthesis of those modern revisional insights into the psychological and ethical structure of person (of Wilkes, MacIntyre and Williams), viz. of the excessive subjectivism of traditional Cartesian philosophy of mind on one hand; and the excessive individualism of the Kantian, moral subject, on the other. These together are seen by him as "expressing a *subjective-individualist* conception of personality", which is the object of his analysis and refutation[69]. Wilkes on mind and MacIntyre and Williams on ethics sometimes present Greek thinking as "anticipating" their own work; this is Gill's line too though with the qualification that he does not identify the Greek and modern as one line of thinking. Instead he argues that one important distinction is that Greek thinkers were *even more* "objectivist" in the framing of their ethical theories than these moderns prescribe[70].

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[67]Human, 236: ὅσσοις χάριτας Ἀφροδίτης ἔχων, 721: ἄριν τ' ἄνακτι θώμεθ'; Savage, 139: ὠμοφάγον χάριν. Divine, 535: Διονύσου χάριν.

[68] Pentheus wants to know what *idea* "form" the mysteries of Dionysus take; *idea* is unspeakable, unpinned down and concealed in this context 471: τὰ δ' ὄργι' ἐστὶ τίν' ἰδέαν ἔχοντά σοι; Dionysus' world is not one of transcendent but shifting time-shaped *morphai*; the god like his reality takes arbitrary, changing forms "however he wants to", 478: ὁποῖος ἤθελ'·

[69] Gill, 1996: 9. Williams replaced Kant's terminology of "morality" with the more appropriately Aristotelian one of the "ethical" to obviate any confusion with his views. See Gill, 1996: 7 n. 23.

[70] Gill, 1996: 9

The fundamental aim of Gill's work, then, is to "counteract" the "subjective, individualist and subjective-individualist strands of thought" pervasive in shaping modern notions of mind and ethics. In place, he offers an "objective-participant account" of these. By this he means to combine an 'objective psychological framework' with a 'participant' ethical framework[71]. Gill's "objective-participant view" is, in itself, a salutary reaction against the excessive and indeed unhistorical subjectivism of an often inarticulately Kantian, moral individualism and normative, Cartesian structuring of the person that has coloured so much modern interpretation. Gill's critical work also anticipates my own approaches, with important similarities and differences. It will thus be worthwhile to note in some further detail how he defined his main idea.

Distinguished definitively from the "subjectivist-individualist conception", Gill summarizes his "objective-participant conception" in five points. "To be a human being or (rational animal)" is: (1) to act on the basis of reasons fully conscious or not; (2) to participate in forms of life and in discourse concerning the nature and significance of those forms of life, the outcome of which participation will be knowledge concerning the good life and a corresponding character and way of life; (3) to be a person whose "psycho-ethical life" is typically conceived of as an internal 'dialogue', has the potential to become 'reason-ruled' by the discourse of social norms and 'reflective debate about the proper goals of a human life'; (4) to have the potential to become 'reason-ruled' through admission into effective participation in 'interactive and reflective discourse' i.e. the forms of life of one's cultural community; (5) to understand oneself as a human being, with "the fullest development of human rationality" involving reflection on the meaning of this humanness and its relation to 'participation in other kinds of being, such as being animal and divine'.[72]

Gill's point is that Greek thinking itself expresses what he defines as an objective-participant conception of person. This does certainly seem to be the case for Greek philosophers, and in important ways is true of Euripides. But the poet of Dionysus in *Bacchae*, as we shall see in the course of this study, suggests a less exclusively rationalist ethics, a less mental structuring of the human person. Lines are more blurred in the world of *Bacchae*. Qualities do not *stand* in the opposite relations that would make them more amenable to logical, rational scrutiny. Instead they *move* as if along spectrums of colour, turning into their opposites. The human mind must necessarily evaluate and assess by articulating values contrastively. Thought causes things to pause in order to be grasped and defined but the dynamism of Dionysus' world causes thought's "standing" and "pausing" to seem only

[71] Gill, 1996: 85-6. See also a discussion and evaluation of Gill's contribution, contextualized in the scholarly arguments over character in Tragedy in Thumiger's study of *Bacchae*, Thumiger, 2007.

[72] Gill, 1996: 11-12.

momentarily or relatively valid. This is a world closer to the one in which humans, most of whom are not philosophers, actually live. It is a world marked by intercourse more than discourse, ignorance dappled with insight, rhythms, distortions and epiphanies, intensification and relaxation, the life of the body and the mind inextricably entangled as properties of a single, opaque being.

The persons we encounter are pullulating with desires. They are schemers, gossips and wantons. The city of Thebes as a whole has this sickness, the symptoms of which are not knowing how to evaluate, how to identify divine persons or a worthwhile life. The only cure – *akē* – for this breakdown of persons *and* forms of life is a special kind of knowledge, *sophia*, which is not "rationality". People are urged not to reflect but to dance. They are indeed shown as beings having the potential for reflective debate with themselves and not avalingavailing themselves of that potentiality. But something anterior is at stake. What will make humans *wish* rightly? What can constrain them to have the desire for healthy forms of "participation" in forms of life and reflection on those forms of life? What will make them *want* to cherish as a highest value in itself the rule of reason; interactive and reflective discourse; received, changing, disputed social norms; the ideal of the good life; their identity as rational humans, supposedly distinct from other kinds of being?

There is a certain measure of arbitrariness in taking any position on value, including the position that one ought to take a position, be reflective, value rationality, participate fully in internal and interpersonal dialogue, etc. Most people are not philosophers and it seems they do not wish to feel that their values are arbitrary. The world of *Bacchae* is the world of imperfect community, of failing forms of life, of persons who *fail* in many ways but most strikingly both in talking with themselves too much and too little. There is rationality in *Bacchae* but it is of the wrong kind. There is participation, but in the wrong spirit. There is attempt to share rational discourse but it is frustrated. The problem in this world is one of desire and of the quality of desire. Relationships are not purely mental or discursive but more healthily characterized by certain qualities of feeling. Things phenomenal and not only conceptual constitute this world: bodies and their experience, mood and emotion. Presence of persons is not simply participation in verbal or symbolic intercourse, not only presence of mind, but something with an animal dimension, something very nearly erotically physical.

Co-presence of persons, human common life, is co-presence of bodies. Yet, paradoxically, certain modes of the "animal" co-presence of bodies possess a quality usually associated with divine beings. Certain forms of community or the incorporation of individuals into a social group can seem to cause a transcending of individual selfhood, a powerful binding together of persons. Along with this there can take place the apparent transcending also of

discursive forms of life and *talkative* modalities of association and understanding. Such are the Dionysiac contexts, taking their character from music, dance, religious enthusiasm, ritual actions. They are situations of intense sociality, the binding together of persons in common mood, feeling single emotions as if a single person, bound together in a noose, *brochos*, of "light madness" *elaphra lussa*. This "madness" can take a healthy form, in the formation and re-affirmation of wholesomely exuberant community. It can also take exactly the opposite form, that of the hysterical mob, in which personhood will be ultimately entirely lost, both individual and communal. Such is what transpires at Thebes, in which individual, family and city break down.

The ideal nature of person, the kind of human Aristotle thinks humans ought to be, is expressed by Gill in his care in describing the qualities of persons as *potentialities*[73]. "Rational animal" is also misleading, for it may be that humans are not simply animals distinguished for their potential for *rationality*. Humans are more defined by their quality of *concern,* i.e. for their feeling that things matter than for their rational potential. That is one way to say that they are marked by their intense relating to others, to themselves and to their world of experience. Caring about being good, having a meaningful life, being just and valuing reason are not values we arrive at, in *Bacchae*, by being rational or reflective. They are values that arise in some other way; they are transmitted values or they issue from an inspired insightfulness or leap of faith in the unity of the good, the beautiful and the divine. As the chorus of Dionysus' followers sing: "Whatever it is that the divine [*daimonion*] is,/ (And) this, over the long *durée*, is upheld [*nomimon*]/will be and always has been."[74] Tragedy does not reveal human beings marked so much for their rationality as for their calculating nature and their failure to *care.*

In *Bacchae* rationality, the power of the mind and serviceability of language and discourse, are made to seem relative. It is the *manner* of thinking and the *quality of responsiveness* which seems to be determining. The good life is evoked, and it is something that humans should wish for and aim at, but how it would be accessed will not be through terms amenable to objective-participative analysis, but through the participation by transformed subjects in a community of emotion – sympathy, joy, camaraderie, the suspension of competitiveness – with social others. *Bacchae* presents a different kind of vision, one in which there is neither participative solidarity nor the desire for solidarity in forms of interpersonal relating aimed at a good life. Some of the questions posed in *Bacchae* are: How will persons *begin* to want a

[73] Gill has extensive chapters on Plato and Aristotle; see on Aristotle's "psycho-ethics" the key "Being yourself and Meeting the Claims of Others" and "Being a Person and Being Human", Gill, 1996: 321-469.

[74] 894-6: ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον, / τό τ' ἐν χρόνωι μακρῶι νόμιμον / ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός. For these lines see also § 4.3 p. 252 n. 101, § 5.5.3 p.341 n.158, § 7.3 p. 400-401.

good life? Is the good life what we thought? Are persons what they thought? Is thinking really what constitutes or transforms the nature of person? Do humans participate *simultaneously* in the human, animal and divine? The world of drama is simply a more diverse one than the philosophy of mind or ethics comprehends. Here persons are abrasive and difficult, striving with others and at odds with themselves, and what will be determining is not only whether they can learn to become reason-ruled but primarily what quality of bearing they have towards others, themselves and existence. With Dionysus, the god who arrives unforeseen, what counts is how persons are oriented towards him and towards the new and the strange; towards the onset of unfamiliar knowledge, *mathos*; new relationships, new identities and *thanatos*, death, the transformation that casts its light on all human doings and defines their lives as mortals, *thanatoi*.

The "psycho-ethical" value judgements implicit in Gill's language of potentiality can certainly also be ascribed to Aristotle on ethics. For Aristotle being 'reason-ruled' and rationally reflecting on how to live a good life, one marked by precisely such rule-by-reason and rational reflectiveness, is seen as the very means towards what is adjudged the highest end of life. In this study I conscript Aristotle on agency, challenging Vernant's reading of Aristotle and arguing that the language of volition, desire, judgement and deliberation common to Euripides and Aristotle, demonstrates a similar attending to these as fundamental concerns of human life. Aristotle, however, is analytical and classificatory, whereas the dramatic poet presents a context of blurred definitions, transitions, dynamic shifts, ambiguity and multiple perspectives. *Bacchae* is the messy world of *parole*, of talk in time; it presents humans in interlocutive postures. Aristotle's is a discursive context, an act of rational reflectiveness on the rules that do and ought to govern human action for the purpose of a good life, a context of *langue* or rules deduced.

A problem here is the radical time-boundedness of a tragedy like *Bacchae*. Its protagonists are non-ideal participants in an inter-subjective order, conceived as responsible for their own desires and tragically reflecting too late on these. But *Bacchae* does not suggest that rational reflection would have been the truer way of life. Instead it relativizes the value of the mind and problematizes its nature and the nature of thought and reflection in themselves. *Bacchae* complicates things radically. What a person is and what knowledge is and how one ought to know and what the most worthy objects of knowledge could be, are presented as problems. The answers are suggested and they may not satisfy the objective standards of scientific methods that do not countenance the vague and ambiguous or emotions. For, it seems that it is in affect, in emotional bearing and qualities of feeling and attending, that the poet of *Bacchae* locates a special, Dionysiac kind of knowledgeability.

It is from a philosophical work (also from 1985), Taylor's "Agency and Language," that I draw for my discussion of the ethical psychology of *Bacchae*. It is no longer necessary to argue for the value of a non-Cartesian model of the mind. I have turned to the anthropology of agency or personhood and its detection, in the work of Alfred Gell and others[75]. For there is another approach to person/agent, which, like Gill and Vernant, repudiates the notion of "historical development" and any over-privileging of subjectivity as an absolute, unscrutinized value, but at the same time finds that Greek poets are concerned with human experience, with the experience of feeling like an agent, like the subject of one's own experience, and not only with the objective description of generalities and structures or the prescription of rational ethical attitudes. The social world of engagements and participation does not simply determine individual persons but is recursively reconstituted by them. There is a dynamic relationship between preceding norms and their successors.

One recent discussion, Thumiger's 2007 *Hidden Paths*, provides an excellent map of the routes taken by interpretation of *Bacchae*, from the point of view of the notion of the subject and character. Thumiger reads *Bacchae* through an informed knowledge of the formative philosophical paradigms that shape criticism. Through Gill's contribution to the understanding of personality in Greek poetry and thought, she attempts a conciliation of diverse approaches to the problem of character, the subjective and the objective views. Rather than being occupied with character and characterization in *Bacchae* – questions of psychology, narrative and dramatic strategies for showing these and the debate entailed on the nature of the Greek conception of characterization and its differences from modern assumptions about depth and individuality – I examine the problem of agency and personhood.

In *Bacchae* the audience does not simply witness a revenge drama. The play includes the most remarkable enactment of the gradual loss of self-control and later the depiction of a coming round, the slow regaining of the mind that had been catastrophically lost. What has precipitated these processes – elements of Dionysus' plan of revenge – was an initial unwillingness to recognize the god and his mother and their connection with Zeus. Humans have been free to act, to go one way or another. The problem has been what they have desired and not desired, their failure to pause or feel confronted by doubt or dilemma, *mermērizein*. Agency is fundamental in *Bacchae* – it is just that the more primary agency has been at stake, not freedom to act in any given way, but freedom to want what healthy agents really want. Desiring and having the right desire, i.e. being able to identify what ought to be desired and for those to be one's authentic desires, these are central in *Bacchae*. The play is a

[75] On agency detection in contemporary cognitive psychology Baron-Cohen, 1997; Tomasello, 1999; and cognitive science of Greek religion, see Baron-Cohen, Larsson, 201: 66-126.

very sophisticated exploration of agency in the terms of desire, judgement, choice and their breakdown.

The bibliography on Dionysus is immense and constantly expanding. In the last five years alone, very important collections on Dionysus and on *Bacchae*, fresh translations and papers, seem to mark a renewed impetus, since the highwater of the 1980s, which was something of a golden age for Dionysus scholarship in a century that itself will be looked backed on, since 1872 and the publication of *Die Geburt der Tragödie*, as the *aetas dionysia*. While we must forego a review of that literature, which in itself would form a whole study, much of it will be referred to in the course of this study.

Although Radke's 2003 *Tragik und Metatragik: Euripides' "Bakchen" und die moderne Literaturwissenschaft* returns to an Aristotelian reading of the play and discovers rather less value in postmodernist approaches, her Aristotelianism is one more predicated on the Aristotle of *Poetics* than of the ethical works. Of course, inherent in *Poetics* is Aristotle's assumptions about *ēthos*, but her argument is more a salutary re-focusing on the play as a classic study in pity and fear than an exploration of desire and agency, the structure of the will and personhood of protagonists, as is the case in this study. It is certainly helpful to relativize the idea of Dionysus as *paralogisches Symbol*, which has made him so serviceable to all manner of anti- or non-humanist trends in modern thought. It must be clear, however, that a fundamental lesson of *Bacchae* is that any perspective is relative, that where authority lies, how we authenticate relations and how we verify truth, is problematic. Dionysus really does frustrate human reason and mind and this episode from his life does also work to induce not only sympathy and fear for persons, but reflection on the nature of sympathy and emotion.

There *is* a prescriptive element implicit in Euripides' work, just as there is in Socratic philosophy. It adjures mortals to know themselves better, to handle their desires differently and to evaluate their finite lives other than they may be doing. It is however not only reason or the discursive life of the community, through which one travels towards *sophia,* but through an anterior inspiration communicated from a divine origin. It is not the mind in dialogue but in full flight and in song that truly *knows*. In this study of *Bacchae*, I proceed by setting the drama against Aristotle's work on ethics, the basic premise of which is that one ought to and can live a good life. His philosophy, like Greek drama, is concerned with the ends of life. Charles Taylor's philosophy of agency is also ethical and prescriptive, taking as its given premise that one ought to want to live a deeper, better kind of life in which one's values are more articulate and one is an ethical and self-reflexive agent. He shares that ethical axiom with ancient philosophers and with the Greek Tragic poets. I set his

investigations of personhood and agency against *Bacchae* in an attempt to illuminate its meanings. One ought to want to want the good life and thinking, reasoning persons stand a good chance of that. But reason, in itself, is not the primary motivation. Should I be good out of calculation, because I shall be happier than if I am not? Is it a strategy for peace and security? Or should I be good because social approval feels better than disapproval? But on what authority should anything be the case? What, really, can self-interest be, when "self" is so hard to define and comprehend? Reasonable people also use reason for wicked motives and it is not certain that the Socratic optimism that conflates evil with ignorance is quite right; certainly Aristotle did not think it was. Some kind of primary faith, some original motive for the good seems to be hinted at by Euripides in *Bacchae*. Some kind of uncodifiable ethical posture is described, something having to do with imagination rather than reason and a pre-rational sympathy rather than rationality.

A psychological, ethical but also a cognitive anthropological reading of personhood is possible. Although there is not the space in this detailed engagement with *Bacchae* to describe all of the possibilities and ideas, it must be said that these are exciting times for the study of Greek Tragedy. It has long been studied with a normative conception of the historical human subject and of the fictional 'person' of poetry. Now, the *normative* character of interpretation is all the more apparent and Greek Tragedy becomes an opportunity to revise what we think the Greek view of persons and subjectivity was, how they re-articulated that in poetry and philosophy. Perhaps this may in turn transform and certainly enrich also our own contemporary notions of person and agent, which are so clearly not *données* but *nomima*.

Greek poetry is treated here through the optics of recent research in philosophy, anthropology, sociology, the history of religion and archaeology: Alfred Gell's work on art and agency; Anthony Giddens' theory of structuration, agent and institution in time; Michael Tomasello's cognitive anthropology of humans as "ultra-social" agents, uniquely capable of "sharing attention"; the cognitive science of religion has been formative for my thinking; as has the implicit theory of culture developed through the prism of "symbolic archaeology" in the work of Ian Hodder. Maurice Bloch's anthropology of ritual, with its notion of the dialectic of vitality and transcendence, casts its light on many of the arguments here, even if not always acknowledged or even consciously so, I suspect. All of these have in common a desire to get away from the limits of structuralist and functionalist views of culture. That frustration was already brilliantly expressed as early as 1973 with Geertz' essays in *The Interpretation of Culture*[76]. These thinkers and writers are being mentioned out of

[76] Geertz, 1973.

a sense of obligation to full disclosure. The ideas of Gell, Giddens, and Tomasello especially, have profoundly shaped this interpretation of *Bacchae* and the anthropological approach towards Tragedy that is being groped towards here.

There may be a rhythm over time, a movement between the valorizing of the objective and of the subject and its experience. Now it is *Es* and later *Ich*. In *Bacchae* what is sure is that *Dionysos soll werden*. Elsewhere I discuss Time in Greek Tragedy, a question of much consequence for the understanding of and interpretive posture taken against *Bacchae*. Dionysus is the most *ad hoc* of gods, as human lives always are *ad hoc* and *local*. While scholars such as Gill, Vernant, Burkert and others may have been motivated to define and deploy an objective philology of a culture, Ancient Greece, that itself may have thought and valued "objectively" and not invested "subjectivity" with the prestige that romantic modernity has done, it is nevertheless the case that a drama like *Bacchae* shows something like a phenomenological view of persons. They are not rational animals or the agents that they ought to be, as in philosophy, or universals as in science, but particular, complex subjects of experience *in time*. Their subjective experience, their own lives, matter to them. They constitute a Lifeworld, which is always a twilight scene, somewhere perpetually halfway between knowledge and ignorance.

This episode in the life of Dionysus, his celebrants and Thebes, is Euripides' exploration of the nature, meaning and possibility of living a good, happy or blessed life, 426: εὐαίωνα διαζῆν. But what "it" is that lives a good life is not an object of secured knowledge; it remains an open question. The self in Dionysus' vicinity becomes lost. What this property is that can be lost and re-acquired, these strange immaterial properties of *person* and *agency*, is a question opened up in *Bacchae*. It is a question, which in this tragic framing, through the phenomenal experience of theatre rather than the discourse of ideas, may be itself transformative, if we take the right bearing.

1.4 The Organization of this Book

The following study of *Bacchae* may be divided into two parts: part 1 on "agency" and part 2 on "person". This general introduction is followed by five chapters and a short conclusion. Chapters 2 and 3 form the first part – *Bacchae* in the light of two conceptions of agency, ancient and contemporary: that of Aristotle and that of Charles Taylor and his development of Harry Frankfurt's ideas.

Chapter 4 provides something of a linking between the first part – more closely focused on agency as a certain kind of handling of desire – and the second, on the problem of identifying, locating and defining kinds of personhood in *Bacchae.* Chapters 5 and 6 attempt to show how person, being a virtual property of beings – mortal, immortal, fictional, dead – is one requiring special modes of apperception and detection. The complex relationship between presence and appearance is one explored in a sophisticated manner in *Bacchae*. What a person *is* is a question inseparable from the problem of knowing, recognizing or accessing persons. These questions are reflected on in part 2.

Chapter 2 – "*Hopoios ēthel'*: The Agency of Desire and Choice in *Bacchae*" – discusses the vocabulary and dramatization of desire and volition as is found in both *Bacchae* and one of the most important formulations of agency in the Western tradition, Aristotle's *Nichomachaean Ethics*. Chapter 3 – "Ah!: Tragedy's Articulacy" – studies a recent philosophical perspective on agency and its bearing on Euripides' drama. Chapter 4 – "*Adēlotes* – Belief and the Uncertainty of Persons" – explores the problems inherent in recognizing the identity of other persons. Chapter 5 – "*Ou raidion zētēma*: Abducting Dionysus & Detecting Agency" – explores the special modes of inference that Dionysus elicits. Chapter 6 – "*Ōps ops*[77]: A Voice in the *Aithēr*, a Face in the Clouds" – is a brief review of the much discussed question of the face and mask of Dionysus, in the light of everything said up to that point.

An answer is hazarded to the riddle that *Bacchae* sets, the inverse of the sphinx's riddle in Euripides' *Oedipus*: the answer in *Oedipus* is a human person; in *Bacchae* that is the question, 'what *is* a human person?' The solution to that riddle as offered by *Bacchae* is that a person is something having contents. The vessel of those contents is a necessary but not sufficient condition for personhood. The contents of character – motives and speech – are nearly sufficient but not quite. A person is a being in time, not only a presence but an appearance: a present being, both a voice and a face. Such, it is argued, is the conclusion that *Bacchae* encourages us to draw. In conclusion, Chapter 7 seeks to bind together all that has been said up to that point. It has been a *meristic* reading of *Bacchae* striking a different path from the aspirations of objectivist philology or the orthodox *telestic* reading. In *Bacchae*, this episode from the composite biography of a god, there will have been traced a concern with desire and knowledge, the contents of persons, *phrenes*, the potential for the right kind of agency and a pre-occupation with the problem of identifying persons and motivations.

[77] *LSJ* s.v. ὄψ: "voice, whether in speaking, shouting, lamenting . . . word (Cogn. with ἔπος, εἰπεῖν.). ὤψ: "eye, face, countenance . . . θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἔοικεν in face she is like the goddesses, Il.3.158".

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Hopoios ēthel[1]:

The Agency of Desire and Choice in *Bacchae*

Pe. ×–◡– ×> ἂν δοκῇι βουλεύσομαι.[2]

2.1 Introduction

The human social world is one of ongoing, mutual interpretation of minds and their encounters with one another in tragic or comic entanglement. Persons are deeply interested in one another and are, we can always assume, interested in themselves.[3] This is not a simplistic fact, but one of great importance in considering Greek drama and its god, Dionysus. People are consistently and powerfully drawn to other people, to knowing about them, to having and expressing relations with them. *Bacchae* opens with a god whose legitimacy – his relationships – had been the subject of gossip. Dionysus breaks up the normal social relations of production (114-20), he breaks up the routinized experience of time and of relations, making the common unfamiliar and creatively estranging the self-evident. Healthily and unhealthily, in a wholesome way and in an aggressive way, mortals are "ultra-social"; they bind themselves to one another. This becomes eminently clear in the drama of the manifesting god, the divinity who comes to reveal lines of relation, their binding and their undoing.

A subject's context constitutes an environment of attention for the life of their affects and passions, both within the mind and without the body. "Interest" – as the Latin root suggests – connotes inter-relation. Greek drama, as a communal and civic expression is a re-instituting of interrelations. Social connections become articulated in the theatre. Through

[1] "However he would wish", 478. Note Roux's comment on this line: "impertinence et familiarité; c'est un vers de comédie. Le poète rappelle discrtètement l'un des caractères spécifiques de la personnalité de Dionysos, dieu multiforme qui peut choisir ses apparences.". Key here is not what the god can choose, but that he has open to him the infinite choice that distinguishes him from humans. His multiplicity and power of metamorphosis, like that of Zeus generally and, for example, Athena in *Odyssey,* is the expression of the peculiar volitional character of the divinity.

[2] "… I shall deliberate on what seems best." 843.

[3] Gould, 1978: 43 "Plays, we say, are about people, about people doing and saying things. What they say and do gives us access to the kind of people they are – their personalities, their individuality, their 'character'. And we find people interesting. Simply, crudely put, this is the basis of what we call our interest in dramatic character." See also Tomasello, 2014b on "ultra-sociality", and the peculiarly intense sociality belonging uniquely to humans, the ground condition of the defining, human form of agency – language, Tomasello, 1999, 2008.

the binding together of diverse, individual perspectives into one common perspective, the *polis* is reconstituted as a unified, body corporate. In the special circumstances of the theatre, in the physical co-presence of fellow citizens, the diversity of subjects becomes as one subject a *polis* person with a common mind.

Tragedy expresses that congenital, human fascination with others and for a time satisfies it and turns it, through the experience of intensified joint-attention[4], to a social use in the consolidation of the *polis* identity. It is not simply functional, however, even if it has this beneficial effect. Its meaning is not exhausted by its social or political usefulness. Tragedy describes persons not only as citizens but as humans. The Attic poet takes and encourages an anthropological perspective on his specific scenes. It is a mortal, human identity that is always being explored by these poets. It is a view at eye-level, not from an artificially privileged position above.

20th C. thinkers, and interpreters of Greek poetry have sometimes sought to limit and qualify, or even deny the significance to Attic drama of the conventional philosophic conception of the Will and its freedom[5]. Discussions of the will have been framed by concepts (and their diverse valorizations) of freedom, self-realization, autonomy, responsibility and imputability derived above all from Enlightenment thinkers such as Descartes, Kant and Hegel and reactions against those thinkers, most notably in the 20th Century with its ever increasing appreciation of the place of the unconscious and the impersonal, material and historical forces that shape if not determine human life [6]. The "agent" – both in its critical affirmation and critical denial – as that has been conceived in modernity since the Enlightenment, has been understood as the self-constituting originator of its acts. As Vernant summarized the normative view he wished to historicize, the autonomous agent is considered as such, "Dès lors qu'un individu s'engage par un choix, qu'il *se* décide, il se constitue lui-même, quel que soit le plan où se situe sa résolution, en agent, c'est-à-dire en sujet responsable et autonome se manifestant dans et par des actes qui lui sont imputables."[7].

[4] For the notion of "joint-attention", see Tomasello, 1999.

[5] Snell, 1928 and his reponse to the criticisms of Wolff, 1929, Snell, 1930; Lesky, 1966, 1972; Rivier, 1968; Vernant, 1972; Thumiger, 2007; Morris, 2014. For a good discussion of this issue and of Snell and Adkins as "expressing leading features of post-Cartesian and post-Kantian thinking about the self and personhood" see esp. Gill, 1996: 29-93, this quote p. 29.

[6] In the study of Ancient Greek culture, Dodds represents the most original adaptation of the study of Greek culture to the insights of psychology and the place of the unconscious in individual and social life, see Dodds, 1927, 1951, and of course the landmark commentary on *Bacchae*, 1960 [1944]. Note also Goldhill, 1997 on modern 20th Century approaches to Tragedy, with observations on Dodds and the case of *Bacchae*, and see Schlesier, 1994 and Humphreys, 2004 for historical perspectives on the interpretation and anthropology of Greek religion.

[7] Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 43-44.

In this chapter I begin with a consideration of Aristotle on ethics and explore what his differentiated discussion of the voluntary and involuntary, desire, judgement, deliberation and choice may have to offer a reading of *Bacchae*. Aristotle, like the modern philosophers juxtaposed with him in the following chapter, gives us a vocabulary, helpful in understanding the *articulacy* of Tragedy and some of its basic premises. Just as Aristotle's project is to explore the nature and possibility of living a good life, so too is the ethical concern omnipresent, implicitly and explicitly, in Greek Tragedy. Even if this has not been the premise of most recent scholarship on *Bacchae* and its god, who looks so seductively *jenseits* morality, I hope to show that this is very much the case.

The important difference between my approach and the traditional one, (as well as the typical refutation of the traditional view), is that I am concerned to discuss the figures of Greek drama neither as sovereign, individual subjects, nor as overdetermined objects, but primarily as definitively *social* entities. It is not that we ought not to consider persons as individuals in the modern, late-capitalist, post-Freudian sense, only that they are not as discrete as we may think. They are certainly not so hermetically sealed and autonomous as, in drama, they can think they are. Agency is, to borrow Gell's term, "distributed". Essential in my understanding of agency is a certain reflexivity built into the concept: it is indissociable from the recognition of agency and thus is "distributed", as it were, between the agent of apprehension and the apprehended. *Bacchae* represents, of course, the very model of the porousness of persons amongst other persons and of the dispersed character of personhood, its being "hard to locate"[8]. Even in their isolation human figures are inter-subjective. They are social members, as it were, of themselves, parts of a community that is always essentially virtual, being the quality defined by *relation*.

I discuss one very important dimension of what I will provisionally call the 'society of the self'[9]. This is the dimension of choice and desire in individuals as this is explored in *Bacchae*. Persons have parts. Not only are they members of intersubjective social groups, sharing *homilia*[10], but they are formed of members – different voices make themselves heard and are 'heard' by other aspects within a single person. A person is constituted as if on the model of the social community in which human life always takes place: a context of dynamic co-presence (I mean in the healthiest scenarios, or the normative context of cognitive and social

[8] Elusiveness: this hardness of location of the mind will become the realized literally, most vividly materialized in the descriptions of Pentheus shredded and rent body, described by the messenger as "not easily found", 1139: οὐ ῥάιδιον ζήτημα, and which Kadmos searched out with great difficulty, 1299: ἐγὼ μόλις νιν ἐξερευνήσας φέρω.

[9] Cf. Schwartz in Bernabé, 2013: esp. 313-7, where she writes of Pentheus as a wanderer 'outside self and community'. Cf. Gill, 1996: on personhood and "the self in dialogue".

[10] *Homilia*: sociality, fellowship, cf. *LSJ s.v.* "intercourse, company, society, intercourse, association, company". *Bacchae* is replete with words for different kinds of community formation: *thiasos*, *kōmos*, *oikos*, *dōma*, *polis*.

competence of persons in the *polis*). This wholeness is dramatized *a contrario* through the scenes in *Bacchae* that are brought before the imagination, images of the body: irrefragable, once taken apart not to be made whole again, its members rent asunder, irrecuperable[11]. Parts of a human subject compete with others. Different potential selves, different desires and the possible identities (like the different paths one chooses) may be said to also compete for actualization. That at least is implicit in the presentation of figures, in Euripides, who desire or *could* desire different things. They are figures on whom persuasion is attempted. And in persuasion is implied alternative and possibility, even when persuasion ultimately does not avail.

From the traditional terms of freedom, imputability and responsibility, the *Scheideweg*, which leads to overdetermination in one direction and underdetermination in another, I wish to strike out on a different path. In this and the following chapter, I begin from the work, principally, of Aristotle (in the *Nicomachaean Ethics*) and of Charles Taylor (as set out in the essays in *Human Agency and Language – Philosophical Papers 1*)[12]. Taylor, himself starting from a discussion of Frankfurt on persons, resets the discussion of agency and of free will. It is not Free Will – *libre arbitre,* the traditional object of Western philosophical reflection[13] – in the usually received philosophical sense that is the subject of discussion here, but "free willing", the freedom to desire, the freedom *between* desires, rather than actions alone. In their work Jean-Pierre Vernant and Louis Gernet sought to historicize what may distortingly look to modern eyes like an eternal philosophical category[14]. From the historical perspective of another important scholar, there may not have been questioning of what would become the 'classic problem of free will' amongst the Greeks of Euripides' time, but nor was there any notion of an abolute determinism. Thought is no less 'real' than desire, one does not 'repose' on the other but each is constantly, dialectically shaping the other. Thus Adkins, in his discussion of these issues in Aristotle's ethics wrote:

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[11] See esp. 1216-21.

[12] Taylor, 1985, esp. "What is human agency?" 15-44; "Self-interpreting animals", 45-76; "The concept of a person" 97-114.

[13] On the psychological determinism in Aristotle that "astonished" D.J. Allan (see "The Practical Syllogism" in *Autour d'Aristote*, 1955), Vernant remarks that the contrast between determination and non-determination, is simply inappropriate: "Or cette antinomie n'est pas pertinente du point du vue d'Aristote. Dans sa théorie de l'action morale, il n'entend ni démontrer ni réfuter l'existence d'une liberté psychologique dont il ne fait état à aucun moment. Pas plus chez lui que dans la langue de son temps on ne trouve de mot pour désigner ce que nous appelons libre arbitre; la notion d'un libre pouvoir de décision reste étrangère à sa pensée, elle n'a pas de place dans sa problématique de l'action responsable, qu'il s'agisse du choix délibéré comme de l'acte accompli de plein gré," Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 52-3.

[14]See Gernet, 1968: *Droit et institutions en Grèce antique* and also Gernet, 1968: *Anthropologie de la Grèce antique.* A notable influence on Gernet and Vernant was the work of Ignace Meyerson who sought to develop an historical psychology, see especially Meyerson, 1948 *Les fonctions psychologiques et les œuvres*. Especially relevant to the current study is 151-85, "La notion de personne".

> . . . the nature of the problems which Aristotle had to solve should be pointed out. Neither Gorgias nor any other Greek of the period before Aristotle believed in a universal determinism, psychological or other. *Some* acts, all agreed, were voluntary: the problem was to discover which, or rather to evolve a theory which should justify beliefs already held. Accordingly, Aristotle could not be expected to dicuss the (now) 'classic' free will problem, *since he knew of no theory of total determinism*, at all events none which thus affected ethical thought.[15]

It is only since Epictetus in the 1st Century CE that the term "Free Will" has been used in its later canonical sense, and has had "droit de cité dans la philosophie grecque". This term is *to autexousion* or *hē autexousiotēs*, which means literally "self-possession", "self control". It first appears in the 1st Century BCE, in Diodorus Siculus (19.105.4), "mais il n'a pas encore chez lui sa valeur technique". In Aristotle's time there was the concept of *eleutheria*, but this "designated not psychological freedom but the legal status of a free man as opposed to that of a slave". *Eleutheria*, according to Vernant, takes on its psychological connotations at about the same time that *to autexousion* comes into use in the same category[16]. Yet we may well ask if the boundaries between legal and social status and psychological or volitional liberty are so clear and well definable. It is never easy to locate the threshold between metaphorical and literal. This is one of the lessons of *Bacchae*. Dionysus in Euripides, as in Aeschylus, for example, is strongly connected with an *eleutheria*[17], a positively valorized liberty, which is irrefutably metaphorical, but also evoked in very literal scenes and language. Slavery, service and the freeman's status are all inverted in *Bacchae* whereby the psychology of desire and choice, autonomy and community, mind and passion are all profoundly and richly explored.

The argument I shall make here is that the operative problem in *Bacchae*, (and, I wish to suggest, in Tragedy generally), concerns not so much determinacy or non-determinacy of acts, nor the fact or illusion of the freedom of will as freedom of action, but "Freedom to Will". What is important, what is redeeming ultimately for how we see them, is what and how characters *desire*. What they *want* to do is far more significant than what they are or are not constrained to do. Desire is anterior and primary; it is through their liberty to wish well, to desire differently, that mortals are free, however constrained by Necessity or Contingency. Humans may tragically or ridiculously suffer, caught up in chains of events

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[15] Cf. Adkins, 1960: 324, my italics.

[16] Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 52-3, n. 20.

[17] *Eleutheros*: the term occurs three times in *Bacchae* (253, 613, 775) and has the strong overtones of legal status to which Vernant refers, but on just such a material, concrete sense does the meaning of the play – a complex and extended exploitation of metaphor and metonymy for just this purpose – repose. The bacchants fantasize about freedom: Pentheus thinks he is free but is not, thinks his prisoner is captive but he is in fact free. Legal status is used here as an instrument against which to more sharply project a psychological state.

that are unfair and opaque, but their bearing, the quality of their relation to others, to gods and mortals, to events and to their own lives is what is decisive in how we see and evaluate them, throughout Euripides' works.

In *Bacchae*, there is much evaluating of will, choice and inclination. There is much differentiation between kinds of desire and kinds of bearing. This is an ethical world in which figures weigh up, calculate or enter into relations of affect, the "authenticity" of which is expressed, in one way, through their spontaneity. Here, persons are desirous and practical agents, who construe others as similarly evaluative and initiating of action. They detect agency and personhood in others. They fail to detect the right quality of agency – mortal or immortal, authentic or inauthentic, "strong or weak"[18] – and wrongly determine the quality of bearing towards, and therefore relationships with, the persons in their midst. They plan around this and feel the rivalry of desires within themselves. They articulate the social world as a contest of wills in which they are enmeshed or entangled. Experience is an engagement of persons as purposive, desirous, willing and unwilling beings. Even when (perhaps especially when) *they* are not properly so, *we* as audience, the person to whom the poet addresses his work, are induced to be evaluative of the desires and impulses of the persons of the drama. In this context, questions of the 'freedom' and legal responsibility of action are less important than the *quality* of acts, or the quality of motivation, which determines choices and relations and what we call the identity or character of different persons.

When is one ever 'free' in the sense of 'independent of external forces' – psychological, historical, social, circumstantial, divine – that one detects often only through their effects, in retrospect? The contemporary philosopher Charles Taylor argues that an essential component of freedom is articulacy. The very articulation to a person (by another, such as a chorus or concerned counterpart), or within a person, of alternatives, contrastively evaluated, is a necessary condition of personhood, and is definitive of agency as he argues it. Articulating, through deliberation, the relative value of different desires is *constitutive* of full agency. Tragic Drama is the art of the articulacy described by Taylor. It is Pentheus' inarticulacy that is his Tragedy. He has not the evaluating depth, which Taylor defines in terms of the capacity for "strong evaluations". Similarly, "shallowness" finds its absolute and counter-illuminating expression in the spectres of the depersonalized bacchants. In Kadmos and others we see ordinary superficiality, "weak evaluators", utilitarians who must pay the price ultimately, of ransoming the self to Dionysus. He is a god in whose proximity

[18] On Taylor's notion of strong and weak evaluations see p. 180 § 3.3.5.

qualities of desire become *evident*, through the consequential "weakness of their evaluations", through the enfeeblement of the agency they might otherwise express.

2.2 *Exōthen*: Aristotle on volition, choice and deliberation

Interpreters of Tragedy, when they have taken recourse to Aristotle, have naturally most often turned to his work on drama, the *Poetics*[19]. Gyburg Radke, to give one recent example, finds in *Bacchae* a "'Schulbeispiel' einer Mitleidtragödie"; she seems intent on rehabilitating *Bacchae*'s reputation with classicist, Aristotelian criteria drawn mostly from his *Poetics* and *On Rhetoric*[20]. As to the question of agency, however, Aristotle's work on ethics also has much that is edifying. What Rivier and others have identified as a modern Kantian and Thomist conception of agency is, of course, traceable to the great Greek philosopher, on whose great work on ethics Aquinas did, after all, write an important commentary. Jean-Pierre Vernant did discuss this work in relation to Tragedy. He represents however, a different outlook from Aristotle, even while arguing, as we shall see, that it is a misleadingly anachronizing to discern anything like a theory of freedom of will in Aristotle. Aristotle on ethics is *bon à penser* in reading Greek poetry, to which of course the Stagirite regularly referred for illustrative examples. Some of his essential points anticipate and correspond closely to the modern philosophers (Frankfurt and Taylor), whom I discuss in some detail in chapter 3. For these reasons, I next turn to some passages from Aristotle's *Nicomachaean Ethics* (*Eth. Nich.*), exploring them alongside passages from *Bacchae* to test what that may reveal.[21]

Dionysus is the god in whom, and in whose myths, the complex volitional contours that give human existence its peculiar shape, its character and face, become evident ("shown", "manifest"). These are just the same contours delineated and explored by Aristotle in his work on ethics. Aristotle lays the priority on the act, the revelation of *proairesis* rather than on the *a priori* character. Drama is phenomenal, it shows acts not impalpable qualities. The *telos* of the art of Tragedy is for Aristotle "a certain activity, not a qualitative state . . . It is

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[19] Jones in his still influential *Aristotle on Tragedy* (Jones, 1968), for example, engages fulsomely with the *Poetics* and relatively sparely with the perhaps less obviously pertinent *Nicomachaean* and *Eudemian Ethics*. For an important point about the relation of *Poetics* to *Nichomachaean Ethics* concerning the question of the relation of self to action, choice and *hexis, see* Jones, 1968: 33-4. See also on Aristotle and Tragedy: House, 1956; Else, 1963; Halliwell, 1986, 2011.

[20] This is a response to decades of modernist and postmodernist interpretations, (Segal, 1997 [1982]; Bierl, 1991: esp. 177-226; Torrance, 2013). See Radke, 2007: esp. 260-70. See also Halliwell's review, to whom Radke's case is "undermined by an ultimately dogmatic account of what Dionysus 'really' stands for", Halliwell, 2007: 484.

[21] For a discussion of many of the issues raised here and in Aristotle on agency – voluntariness, imputability, passion *thumos* and thought *dianoia*, the external or internal source of motivation – see Adkins, 1960: 316-31.

not, therefore, the function of the agents' actions to allow the portrayal of their characters; it is, rather, for the sake of their actions that characterisation is included." The art of Tragedy, which belongs to the god Dionysus, who comes to show himself forth, is for Aristotle the representation, "not of humans but of their acts and of life"[22]. In Tragedy the emotions of fear and pity turn on the hinge of the moment of reversal and recognition; these come about as Halliwell commented "in and through action, rather than consisting of wholly passive sufferings." For Aristotle, Tragedy is concerned primarily with the most important ethical questions, viz. the living or failing to live a good life [εὐδαίμονες ἢ τοὐναντίον], so Halliwell put it in his commentary: "Tragic drama offers us images of the actions on which depends the difference between happiness and unhappiness, terms which for Aristotle signify *judgements on the success or failure of a life in the fullest ethical sense*. Against such a background, 'action' is no loose or empty term for whatever may occur in a play, but a way of denoting tragedy's encompassment of *the significant goals of life*."[23]

Consider the remarks of Aristotle concerning the elements of Tragic poetry. He describes *ēthos*, character, as that which "reveals choice, *proairesis*", through showing dilemma: choice and aversion, in situations in which the right bearing towards the object of choice is unclear, *ouk . . . dēlon*; when no dilemma of choice is involved there is no character being manifested[24]: "Character is the element which reveals the nature of moral choice, in cases where it is not anyway clear what a person is choosing or avoiding (and so speeches in which the speaker chooses or avoids nothing at all do not possess character)"[25]. Does Aristotle mean, as Halliwell seems to read it, that character illuminates or motivates choice? To say that *ēthos* "makes visible" ("reveals", "shows", *dēloi*) choice, is the inverse of what interpreters usually say of actions and character, supposing that *character* is inherent, prior and motivates choices in the anterior relation in which causes stand to effects. I suspect that this is an expression of Aristotle's sensitivity to the dialectical or recursive nature of *ēthos* and *proairesis*: they are properties of persons in time, continously shaping or modifying each other[26]. It is not that there are characters (like profiles on a page) and acts which belong, like objects or property to those characters. Actions – which over time are seen as habitual behaviour, hence *ēthos* –

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[22] Arist. *Poet.* 1450a 16-20: ἡ γὰρ τραγῳδία μίμησίς ἐστιν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεων καὶ βίου [καὶ εὐδαιμονία καὶ κακοδαιμονία ἐν πράξει ἐστίν, καὶ τὸ τέλος πρᾶξίς τις ἐστίν, οὐ ποιότης· εἰσὶν δὲ κατὰ μὲν τὰ ἤθη ποιοί τινες, κατὰ δὲ τὰς πράξεις εὐδαίμονες ἢ τοὐναντίον]. Trans. Halliwell, 1987: 37.

[23] Halliwell, 1987: 95.

[24] Arist. *Poet.* 1450b 7-10: ἔστιν δὲ ἦθος μὲν τὸ τοιοῦτον ὃ δηλοῖ τὴν προαίρεσιν, ὁποία τις [ἐν οἷς οὐκ ἔστι δῆλον ἢ προαιρεῖται ἢ φεύγει] – διόπερ οὐκ ἔχουσιν ἦθος τῶν λόγων ἐν οἷς μηδ' ὅλως ἔστιν ὅ τι προαιρεῖται ἢ φεύγει ὁ λέγων.

[25] Halliwell, 1987: 38.

[26] 22, 47, 50. On the quintessential question of the dialectic of character and acts and this certain 'equivocation' in Aristotle see § 3.1 p. 137 n. 9, § 5.2.4 p. 303 n. 31 and § 5.5.3 p. 337. Cf. also the discussion in C.C.W. Taylor, 2006 on Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113b.

constitute character and character *in turn* motivates further acts of certain qualities, continually while a mortal lives, in this dialectical way.

At the "core" of Dionysus's art of Tragedy – the spatial imagery of outside and inside, surface and depth is almost impossible to avoid[27] – is a conception of mortals as constituted by acts, choices, desires that become manifest in action, thought and word (as is testified to in the kind of scholarly debates it has inspired). In the social world the basic activity that takes place between persons is communicative, ongoing interpretation: connecting facts with reasons, deeds with motivations, effects with causes. In this scenario the quality of acts – whether willed, reasoned, unreasoned, or compelled – are of determining significance. Principal here is the *location* and *ownership* of cause and the self's causativity, or motivation: is this external or internal – *exōthen* or *endothen*; does it belong to the person as author or is it of derived authorship? We may say that Tragedy is interested in how acts are bound to persons, how we connect what is inside to what an agent does. It is interested in causes and phenomena and takes a complex, differentiating view on these.[28]

2.2.1.1 ***Akousion, Hekousion***

> Α. μητέρα κατέκταν τὴν ἐμήν, βραχὺς λόγος.
> Φ. ἑκὼν ἑκοῦσαν ἢ <οὐ> θέλουσαν οὐχ ἑκών;[29]
>
> Al. He killed my mother. A story briefly told.
> Ph. Willingly and by her will or <not> by her wish, and not willingly?

By chance, Aristotle opens the book most pertinent to this discussion – *Eth. Nich.* 3 – with a very "Dionysiac" example and then a reference also to that lost play of Euripides, which was performed between the *Iphigenia at Aulis* and the *Bacchae*, on a Spring day in Athens, 405 BCE, the *Alcmeon at Corinth*[30]. Aristotle is defining the voluntary and the involuntary. The involuntary, *to akousion*, is that which takes place "by force or by reason of ignorance" βίᾳ ἢ δι' ἄγνοιαν. It is a question of location, *repérage*, (the spatial metaphor is persistent). Where

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[27] Cf. on this *Metaphorik* of space Taylor, 1985: 36 "The line here between metaphor and basic theory is hard to draw", see § 3.3.7 n. 650.

[28] See Arist. *Poet.* 1450a 15-33 on the arrangement of actions, *syntaxis*. On the priority of this arrangement over character, as the proper objective of the dramatic poet see Arist. *Poet.* 1450b 8-15.

[29] Nauck[2] *TGF* Eur. fr. 68 attributed to the *Alcmeon at Psophis* see Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1136 a 13, where Aristotle cites these lines opening a discussion of the hardness of pinning down justice and injustice, insofar as they are a matter of intention, the spirit or quality of disposition behind an act, not simply the act.

[30] The *Alcmeon at Psophis* was earlier: see Nauck[2] *TGF* Eur. frr. 65-87. See Hall's essay for a discussion conjecturing what may have been the effect or 'impact' of *Bacchae* in combination with these other two works, in Stuttard: 11-28.

the "moving principle" – *archē* – resides, within an agent or without, will be decisive. Being forced, *biaion*[31], means, by definition, being compelled by a principle, a source of agency, "outside", *exōthen*, of oneself.[32]

> δοκεῖ δὴ ἀκούσια εἶναι τὰ βίᾳ ἢ δι' ἄγνοιαν γινόμενα· βίαιον δὲ οὗ ἡ ἀρχὴ ἔξωθεν, τοιαύτη οὖσα ἐν ᾗ μηδὲν συμβάλλεται ὁ πράττων ἢ ὁ πάσχων, οἷον εἰ πνεῦμα κομίσαι ποι ἢ ἄνθρωποι κύριοι ὄντες.[33]
>
> Those things, then, are thought involuntary (*akousia*), which take place by force or by reason of ignorance; and that is forced of which the moving principle (*archē*) is outside (*exōthen*), being a principle in which nothing is contributed by the person who acts – or, rather, is acted upon, e.g. if he were to be carried somewhere by a wind, or by men who had him in their power.[34]

The voluntariness or involuntariness of mortal acts becomes an issue in the proximity of Dionysus. In the seventh *Homeric Hymn,* Dionysus[35] is himself borne away, abducted, by some Tyrrhenian pirates, who fail to recognize his divinity. They are calculating, wily men, like so many rovers of the sea (Odysseus, Menelaus of *Odyssey*, to a lesser extent Vergil's Aeneas[36]), concerned to make a profit of a very worldy kind. The moving principle that motivates their act is clearly within, and shared between, themselves[37]. They do not act under compulsion, *biai*. Do they seize their fateful windfall – κακὸς μόρος[38] – out of ignorance δι' ἄγνοιαν γινόμενα? The god seems like a king's son to them, they sniff a handsome ransom[39]. He *is* a king's son, of course, the son of Zeus. The helmsman realizes this; he has

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[31] *Biastheis*: see Rivier, 1968: 37, referring to Snell, 1928; and the reading of Soph. *Electra*, 575 Ἀνθ' ὧν, βιασθεὶς πολλὰ κἀντιβάς.

[32] Arist. Eth. Nich. 1109 b 35 – 10 a 4. See also Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 55 "Dans la langue et la mentalité anciennes, les notions de connaissance et d'action apparaissent étroitement solidaires. Là où un moderne s'attend à trouver une expression du vouloir, il rencontre un vocabulaire de savoir . . . Comme l'observe L. Gernet, ce n'est pas alors l'individu en tant que tel qui est le facteur du délit: « Le délit existe en dehors de lui, le délit est objectif » (Gernet, 1917 : 305) Dans le contexte de cette pensée religieuse où l'acte criminel se présente, dans l'univers, comme un égarement de l'esprit, *c'est toute la catégorie de l'action qui apparaît autrement organisée que chez nous*.".

[33] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1110a. 1-4, cf. also 1110b 1-3; 1111a 21-4; ἡ γὰρ ἀρχὴ ἐν ἡμῖν 1112b 28; ἢ τοῖς γε νῦν εἰρημένοις ἀμφισβητητέον, καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οὐ φατέον ἀρχὴν εἶναι οὐδὲ γεννητὴν τῶν πράξεων ὥσπερ καὶ τέκνων. "man is moving principle or begetter of his actions, as of children", 1113b 17-19.

[34] Translations of Aristotle's *Nicomachaean Ethics* are based on Ross & Brown, 2009.

[35]In *Bacchae* it isDionysus who causes mortals to be borne off on the gusts of power, which blow away the cognitive threads that bind them to a specific place and time in an identified social and existential web with one another as citizens, family relations, men or women.

[36] E.g. Hom. *Od*. 1.1. *polutropos* See also the shifty Phoenician at Hom. *Od* 14.288-9 δὴ τότε Φοῖνιξ ἦλθεν ἀνὴρ ἀπατήλια εἰδώς, τρώκτης, ὃς δὴ πολλὰ κάκ' ἀνθρώπους ἐεόργει·.

[37] *Hymn. Hom.*VII. 8-9: οἱ δὲ ἰδόντες/νεῦσαν ἐς ἀλλήλους.

[38] *Hymn. Hom.* VII. 8.

[39] *Hymn. Hom.* VII. 11.

recognized that this implausibly imperturbable figure – ὁ δὲ μειδιάων ἐκάθητο/ ὄμμασι κυανέοισι[40] – is no ordinary mortal[41]. If they were ignorant they are now warned, but desire is stronger in them than this new knowledge about their situation. They insist on not recognizing Dionysus – for one can insist on ignorance and passivity – and because their prior desires are too strong, they want those to remain their "effective desires"[42].

In Dionysus' presence humans become partially subject to the foreign and partially transparent as to the manner of their wishing. Ignorance, voluntariness, compulsion – in the Dionysiac scene these are articulated through just the very phenomena on which Aristotle will rely to tease out the ambiguities and complexities of volition, counsel and responsibility. Sleep, drunkenness, madness, the animal and infantile state, the origin of the motivating master impulse, whether inside or outside the agent – Aristotle uses all of these to exemplify his abstract points, and all of these form motifs, topics and themes of *Bacchae*.

In this Homeric hymn to Dionysus, the pirates' boat is clothed in vine and ivy and the pirates turned into dolphins. Before we leave them to splash on in the waves, we may note that their fate, or the quality of voluntariness which causes this metamorphosis, is not what Aristotle would call "mixed", *miktai*[43]. Throwing goods overboard, because compelled to do so in a storm, is his example of the mixture of voluntary and involuntary. There, one has chosen to do something because forced to. Such actions are, however mixed, on balance more voluntary than involuntary, "for they are chosen at the time when they are done, and the end of an action is *relative to the occasion* [*kata ton kairon*]."[44] The pirates are not constrained and they are given an opportunity to know: in the end, the gods throw men overboard. Being constrained is an important theme with Dionysus. He is often tied up in his myths. Human constraints are ineffective on him. He is the god of loosened ties and wills undone. Scheming seamen may try to bind the happy god in painful fetters, but these have no power to hold him, and they fall away from his hands and feet[45].

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[40] *Hymn. Hom.* VII. 14-15.

[41] *Hymn. Hom.* VII. 17-24.

[42] Effective desires, see § 3.2.2 p. 103. Note that we are told that it is the captain in particular who resists understanding who they have to deal with, τὸν δ' ἀρχὸς στυγερῷ ἠνίπαπε μύθῳ· *Hom. Hym.* VII. 25. The situation has the same shape as *Bacchae*, and Aeschylus' *Lycurgeia* in which the captains of the ship of state catastrophically resist the god.

[43] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110a. 11.

[44] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110a. 12-14: αἱρεταὶ γάρ εἰσι τότε ὅτε πράττονται, τὸ δὲ τέλος τῆς πράξεως κατὰ τὸν καιρόν ἐστιν.

[45] *Hymn. Hom.* VII. 12-14 καὶ δεσμοῖς ἔθελον δεῖν ἀργαλέοισι/ τὸν δ' οὐκ ἴσχανε δεσμά, λύγοι δ' ἀπὸ τηλόσ' ἔπιπτον/ χειρῶν ἠδὲ ποδῶν·. Homer mentions the story of the king Lykourgos who chased the 'raving god' Aeschylus' and his nurses into the sea with a whip, went blind and lived a short life, see Hom. *Il.* 6.132-7. *Edonians* the Pentheus-like King Lykourgos persecutes Dionysus and his followers. It is widely agreed that Aeschylus' Dionysus plays were important models for Euripides'. We have only fragments of these works of Aeschylus, but it is assumed that Apollodorus tells the same story largely. In keeping with this consistent motif in myths of Dionysus, we are told by him of a sudden, prodigious emancipation, see Apollod. *Bibl.* 3.34.4 - 35.3 καὶ Διόνυσος μὲν εἰς θάλασσαν πρὸς Θέτιν τὴν Νηρέως

'Binding' and 'unbinding' form powerful elements in the visual language of *Bacchae*[46]; they dramatize and make visible those otherwise invisible, abstract qualities of voluntariness and involuntariness, which represent such an important dimension of the action. There are, in *Bacchae*, several figures (Teiresias, the Servant who brings in Dionysus captive, the messenger who reports the deeds of the bacchants, the bacchants themselves), who correspond to the *kubernētēs* of the Homeric Hymn. The glib and opportunistic "city-slicker" – *planēs tis*[47] – on the other hand, is of a kind with the piratical profiteers, and Kadmos in his characterization is just as calculating: a man who wagers on Dionysus rather than believes, *mit ganzem Herz*. Kadmos' daughters too, (a crew of cynical siblings who deny Semelē, like the pirates nodding to each other and knowing one another's meaning), are mortals who judge poorly and suffer the loss, not of their human form but of their human contents, their minds. These figures have deduced causes, meaning and identity on the familiar pattern of inference[48].

Foils to the non-recognizing leader, the prudent characters in *Bacchae* recognize the divinity of Dionysus. The servant who brings in the Stranger explains that he had surrendered himself "not unwillingly", ἀλλ' ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας 437, (and as ever, what hands do in *Bacchae* is of great significance). He, in turn, had protested to the Stranger, that only under Pentheus' orders did he arrest him *ouk hekōn*, "not willingly so", 441-42[49]:

> κἀγὼ δι' αἰδοῦς εἶπον· Ὦ ξέν', οὐχ ἑκὼν
> ἄγω σε, Πενθέως δ' ὅς μ' ἔπεμψ' ἐπιστολαῖς.
>
> And I respectfully said, "Xenos, not willingly
> Do I take you in, but by order of Pentheus who sent me."

The themes of constraint and voluntariness are reflected in the recurrent use of *akōn*, *hekōn*, unwilling and willing, and in forms of *anagkē*, compulsion. This is a context then, in which

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κατέφυγε, Βάκχαι δὲ ἐγένοντο αἰχμάλωτοι καὶ τὸ συνεπόμενον Σατύρων πλῆθος αὐτῷ. αὖθις δὲ αἱ Βάκχαι ἐλύθησαν ἐξαίφνης, Λυκούργῳ δὲ μανίαν ἐνεποίησε Διόνυσος. On Aeschylus' *Lykourgeia* and *Edonians* see also n. 140 below.

[46] On this important point, (in this play about the god who is bound, *desmios* and also elsewhere called *lysios*, see Dodds on 433-8 and 498), to which I shall return, note also Thumiger, 2007: 100-6, e.g. "The motif of tying/freeing in *Bacchae* confirms our claims about Pentheus' lack of awareness of his own mental state and his own position in the unfolding events. Imprisonment, binding and liberation are *a characterizing mechanism in the play*, and a central experience in the plot as Dionysus' action in Thebes is in many ways an attempt to 'release', and Pentheus' resistance is an urge to restrain and control, both himself and others.", 100.

[47] At 718-21, "city-slicker", is Dodds' phrase.

[48] On "Dionysiac inference" see Chp. 5.

[49] See Burnet, 1900, on οὐχ ἑκὼν at Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110b 23: "'non-voluntary' as opposed to 'involuntary'. The contradictory is substituted for the contrary."

actors imagine that not only acts matter, but even more significantly, the spirit in which actions are carried out. Bearing, the inner state and condition of the willing agent, is thus imagined to be a determining aspect of deeds, and of how deeds are to be understood and explained. The god cannot be contained or compelled by mortals, and he in turn does not wish to compel, but to be recognized and acknowledged unforced and sincerely; he desires from humans a certain bearing towards himself, a certain quality of relation. The quality of that relation, or that manner of knowing, will be determined by the bearing, the intentional character of mortals.

Dionysus is a *recursive* not a coercive kind of god, he is recognized by those already *euphronountes* "in their right mind"[50]; those who nurture the wholesomeness and sanity which is also his gift to mortals. One must be disposed to know Dionysus and yet it is his knowledge which disposes one to have this orientation to him. His is the feedback-loop of an emotional or affective economy. He does not compel the knowledge by which he is recognized, it is voluntary; in a sense, it must be already in place. To detect this new god[51], one must paradoxically already have a certain cognitive and volitional readiness, perhaps something like a timeless way of knowing, without which one cannot apprehend the strange and the new, except on the insufficient pattern of the already familiar. This manner of knowing is not forced on mortals, and it cannnot be faked by mortals. Teiresias the *mantis* explains to the prejudicious and unseeing king[52], 314-15:

> οὐχ ὁ Διόνυσος σωφρονεῖν ἀναγκάσει
> γυναῖκας ἐς τὴν Κύπριν, ἀλλ' ἐν τῆι φύσει
>
> It is not Dionysus who compels women to be wholesome

[50] *Euphrōn*: 196, 237, 480, 851. *Euphrosynē*: 377; *Aphrosynē*: 387, 1301. *Kakon phronein*: 483 *Phronein*/ *ou phronein*: 332, 853, 1123; *phronein asaleuton* 390-1; *to mē thnēta phronein* 396. *Sōphrōn*: 314, 316, 318, 329, 504, 641, 686, 940, 1002, 1150, 1341.

[51] *Neos theos*: 256, οὗτος δ' ὁ δαίμων ὁ νέος 272, bacchantic worship described pejoratively by Pentheus as *neochma*, 216 and in similar vein at 467. D'Angour, 2011: 157 "While the use of neos in this sentence straddles the meanings of 'young', 'additional' and 'recently come', the more colourful term *neōsti* (219) is both more pejorative and less ambiguous.". Images of the very young and of the old, of Dionysus and Pentheus as "shoots", "foetus", "new-born" (88-104, 288-90; 1170, 1174, 1185-7; the bacchants are expressly depicted as young mothers, 699-703) are set off by a god whose power is to equalize, in his presence, the old and the young, 206-7. In a context where the "youth", "newness", "freshness" is subject to such consistent evocation and diverse valorization, Teiresias remark at 362-3 takes on an especially rich, ironic colouring, ὑπέρ τε πόλεως τὸν θεὸν μηδὲν νέον / δρᾶν. This entanglement of meanings, articulating at the level of the line and the phrase the fact of multiplicity of perspective, is typical of Euripidean Tragedy.

[52] Dionysus is himself designated as *mantis*, 298-9: μάντις δ' ὁ δαίμων ὅδε· τὸ γὰρ βακχεύσιμον / καὶ τὸ μανιῶδες μαντικὴν πολλὴν ἔχει· and by Aeschylus in *Bassarids TrGF* 3 Radt Aesch. fr. 23.2 + 341 [This suggested combination at Sommerstein, 2008: 20-1]: φθάσαντος δ' ἐπ' ἔργοις προπηδήσεταί νιν (?) / ὁ κισσεὺς Ἀπόλλων, ὁ βακχειόμαντις. The *mantis* speaks in a way uncontaminated by personal desires, with the objectivity of the involuntary. Teiresias has that power in states of inspiration. In *Bacchae* we meet him in discursive not mantic mode, he uses logic and talk to persuade, only alludes to his special power of speech, which belongs also to Dionysus, 368-9: μαντικῆι μὲν οὐ λέγω, / τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ· μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει. On the figure of Teiresias in *Bacchae* see Gallistl, 1979, Roth, 1984.

in matters of sex, but they are so by nature

The readiness of these humans to acknowledge him[53], to partake of his "wholesomeness" (*sōphronein*[54]), their uncompelled and unfeigned *bearing* or *attitude*[55], is for Dionysus the decisive point that determines whether *he* will or will not ultimately be their undoing[56]. This is what Dionysus is explaining to Kadmos, after he has destroyed his household, revealed himself as the god and pronounced the punitive fate that awaits the founder of Thebes and his wife Harmonia (herself daughter of a mortal and the god Ares), "If you had known sound-mindedness – *sōphronein – when you did not wish to* – ὅτ' οὐκ ἠθέλετε – you would have obtained the child of Zeus for an ally, and would now be blessed", 1340-3[57]:

ταῦτ' οὐχὶ θνητοῦ πατρὸς ἐκγεγὼς λέγω
Διόνυσος ἀλλὰ Ζηνός· εἰ δὲ σωφρονεῖν
ἔγνωθ', ὅτ' οὐκ ἠθέλετε, τὸν Διὸς γόνον
ηὐδαιμονεῖτ' ἂν σύμμαχον κεκτημένοι.

I say this not as one born of a mortal father
But as Dionysus son of Zeus; if you had known
To be sensible, *when you did not wish to*,
You would be happy now, with Zeus' offspring for an ally.

Dionysus' very first words, lying in his *xenos* persona, express that smooth effortlessness, which will become increasingly recognizable as characteristic of the god – as the chorus of

[53] Readiness, willingness: Kadmos is ready for Dionysus; in the first moments he comes on stage he declares, ἥκω δ' ἕτοιμος τήνδ' ἔχων σκευὴν θεοῦ·, 180; Teiresias exhorts Pentheus to willing receptiveness of the god, 312-13: τὸν θεὸν δ' ἐς γῆν δέχου/καὶ σπένδε καὶ βάκχευε καὶ στέφου κάρα (see § 2.6 p. 118). The knowledge and acquaintance of the common people, to whom Dionysus is so serviceable, χρῆταί, that is just what the chorus wishes to receive τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν, 433.

[54] *Sōphronein*: "wholesomeness of mind" or the "moderateness", "prudence" that is the consequence and mark of mental integrity.

[55] On Kadmos' too calculating comportment, see § 3.3.1.

[56] Cf. σκευήν τ' ἔχειν ἠνάγκασ' ὀργίων ἐμῶν. 34, he has forced ἠνάγκασ' the Theban women who have already spurned him and his divine identity. See also 939-40, where the bedazzled Pentheus is told that he will count Dionysus as a friend when he sees how moderate or self-controlled the bacchants actually are: ἦ πού με τῶν σῶν πρῶτον ἡγήσηι φίλων, / ὅταν παρὰ λόγον σώφρονας βάκχας ἴδηις.

[57] 1340-3: Roux: "Ces vers rassemblent une dernière fois les grands thèmes orchestrés tout au long de la pièce." But note Di Benedetto on the succeeding line 1345 (for translation see p. 81): ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἤιδετε. "Dioniso non pone il problema a livello di intendimenti e di buono o cattivo volere, ma a livello di consocere e non conoscere, e conoscere vuol dire per Dioniso riconoscere che egli è un dio. Ma il consocere attuale, il fatto che ora essi . . . riconoscano la divinità di Dioniso, non modifica affatto la situazione. *L'impianto etico-religioso di Eschilo viene contradetto radicalmente.*", [my emphasis], but from an Aristotelian point of view the question of knowledge and ignorance is intimately connected with will and it cannot be said that ignorance excludes culpability, for it is often the case that one has chosen the conditions of ignorance, cf. also the remarks (of Vernant and de Romilly, 1961) on the supposed "évolution qui d'Eschyle à Euripide tend à 'psychologiser' la tragédie, à souligner davantage les sentiments personnels des protagonistes.", in Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 62-3.

young women from the land of Kadmos, Phoenicia, sing at Thebes in Eur. *Phoen*. 689 "eveything falls together well for gods", πάντα δ' εὐπετῆ θεοῖς. He has no hesitation at all in answering the interrogations of Pentheus, he can speak with *parrhesia*[58], freely, spontaneously responding. With ease he explains his origins: οὐκ ὄκνος οὐδείς, ῥάιδιον δ' εἰπεῖν τόδε, 461[59]. What is the god like, Pentheus asks soon after, 477-78:

> Pe. ὁ θεός, ὁρᾶν γὰρ φὴις σαφῶς, ποῖός τις ἦν;
> Di. ὁποῖος ἤθελ'· οὐκ ἐγὼ 'τασσον τόδε.
>
> Pe. The god, since you claim to see him clearly, what kind of a person was he?
> Di. Whatever kind he wished; it wasn't me who determined that.[60]

Dionysus himself "brought me, caused me to come to Greece" μ' εἰσέβησ' 466[61], explains the Stranger. The god can only have "compelled" – *ēnagkasen* – assumes Pentheus: πότερα δὲ

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[58] Παρρησία: frankness, outspokenness, license, is a telling motif of Greek poetry. In *Bacchae* the messenger wishes to speak παρρησίαι, freely, 668, but worries if he may to the intemperate young king. Dionysiac voices raised in spontaneous, animal calling and crying is the most extreme example of this "freedom of speech", or more accurately freedom to speak. It is a term that occurs frequently in Euripides, see *LSJ s.v.* παρρησία: ἐλεύθεροι παρρησίᾳ θάλλοντες οἰκοῖεν πόλιν κλεινῶν Ἀθηνῶν Eur.*Hipp*. 422, cf. *Ion* 672; παρρησίᾳ φράζειν *Ba*.668 ; *Phoen*. 391. See also the bacchants delighting in speaking freely at 775-7: ταρβῶ μὲν εἰπεῖν τοὺς λόγους ἐλευθέρους/ πρὸς τὸν τύραννον, ἀλλ' ὅμως εἰρήσεται·/ Διόνυσος ἥσσων οὐδενὸς θεῶν ἔφυ.

[59] With which compare Pentheus in efficient mode, to no effect commanding "no delay" in the mustering of the army to see off the civic threat of Dionysus at 780-1: ἀλλ' οὐκ ὀκνεῖν δεῖ· στεῖχ' ἐπ' Ἠλέκτρας ἰὼν πύλας·. *Oknos*: This is Wakefield's emendation, which is accepted by Diggle as by Dodds and most modern commentators (Seaford, Di Benedetto, Kopff, Grégoire & Meunier). The manuscripts read οὐ κόμπος "no boast", on which ad loc. Dodds: οὐκ κόμπος οὐδείς: "… the implied antithesis to ῥάιδιον δ' εἰπεῖν is a false one; and the construction is not very clear…the true reading is Wakefield's οὐκ ὄκνος Roux wants to retain κόμπος, ad loc.: "interrogé sur ses origines, un noble personnage répond habituellement qu'il "est fier", qui'il "se vante" d'être issu d'une famille, d'une glorieuse cité . . . οὐ κόμπος οὐδείς est dit non sans quelque ironie. Il n'y a donc pas lieu de suspecter le texte, comme l'ont fait maints éditeurs depuis Musgrave." Musgrave's emendation ("revived by" Meurig-Davies *CR* 62, 1943, 69, Dodds) is proposed on the parallel offered by Heracles' reply to a question about his identity and intentions in the *Peirithous* [von Arnim, *Suppl. Eur.* 41.5 which in Page's *Literary Papyri* is i. 15.20], Roux: "Mais le contexte est différent", Guidorizzi and Susanetti also retain the manuscripts' οὐ κόμπος οὐδείς.

[60] 478: Seaford: "alludes to Dionysus' power of self-transformation". Di Benedetto: "Lo Straniero con il v. 478 ha spostato il discorso, facendo riferimento alla volontà del dio. Lo Straniero vuol dire: il modo di manifestarsi del dio depende da lui, e quindi io non c'entro", in Dionysus' deflecting of the question Di Benedetto feels that Pentheus at 479 (τοῦτ' αὖ παρωχέτευσας, εὖ γ' οὐδὲν λέγων) does have a point and refers us to the slipperiness of Socrates at Pl. *Prot*. 350 c. But the point here is the doubleness of the Stranger's utterances, not that "io non c'entro", but almost the very reverse, for the Stranger is the God, a kind of doublet of personhood, to understand whose language and meaning the audience needs a kind of versatility, the ability to see two things as one, and a unit as multiple, to bring into focus a double vision – just what Pentheus in that uncanny hallucinatory sequence at 918-22 seems finally, but in an involuntary schizoid way to be doing, *mainomenos*.

[61] 466: The commentators (Dodds, Roux, Seaford, want us to catch a latent meaning in εἰσέβησ' [comparable with *embateuein* found in inscriptions for 'initiate' and *eisbasis* in papyrii, for "an initial magical operation") of "initiate into mysteries" *eis teletas* (from in addition to "bring, cause to go" to Greece, *eis Hellada*. Seaford wants the meaning not to remain latent and translates, "Dionysus himself initiated me, the son of Zeus." I prefer Di Benedetto's reading of these lines, for whom it is not, as Dodds and the others took it, a question of manner or agent of 'introduction' or 'initiation', "come è successo che", but quite plainly of space, "da dove". The point is the tension inherent in this situation of a disguised god who speaks alternatingly, both of and as *himself*; both as a third person, *autos*, and emphatically in the first person cf. 614: αὐτὸς ἐξέσωσ' ἐμαυτὸν.

νύκτωρ σ' ἢ κατ' ὄμμ' ἠνάγκασεν;[62]. Set against this common conception of compulsion and constraint are objects that "act", are animate and move, evidently – ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός – "without mortal hand", testimonies to or proofs of miraculous agency, 447-50:

> αὐτόματα δ' αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν
> κλῆιδές τ' ἀνῆκαν θύρετρ' ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός.
> πολλῶν δ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ θαυμάτων ἥκει πλέως
> ἐς τάσδε Θήβας. σοὶ δὲ τἄλλα χρὴ μέλειν.
>
> Of their own will did the bindings come undone from his feet
> And the bolts sprang off the doors without any human hand.
> Full of many wonders is this man arrived
> here in Thebes. The rest must be your concern.

When the captive Dionysus is marched off to Pentheus' prison, the despairing chorus sings, calling on Dionysus, son of Zeus, 550-52[63] :

> ἐσορᾶις τάδ', ὦ Διὸς παῖ
> Διόνυσε, σοὺς προφήτας
> ἐν ἀμίλλαισιν ἀνάγκας;
>
> Are you looking upon this, son of Zeus
> Dionysus, your promoters[64]
> Struggling with constraint?

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[62] 469: Dodds: "ἠνάγκασεν: "God's will is a compulsion . . . But in Pentheus' mouth the word is ironic". It is a characteristically very loaded kind of irony, for the ironic expense is one whose costs he shall have so drastically to cover, when "uncompelled" he comes by night and face-to-face, under the eyes (Roux: "non pas 'face à face', mais 'à ta vue') of his unseeing and murderous mother. Seaford: although at 467 Pentheus was being "sarcastic" according to Seaford: "It is not certain that (as claimed by Dodds and Roux) Pentheus is being ironic here. Rather, in this dialogue he shows a not entirely uninformed interest in the mysteries, which might indeed involve divine compulsions: 34, Livy 39.18.8 (*necessarius* of the Dionysiac mysteries), Ap. *Met.* 11.29 (Isis in a dream commands initiation).", but even if Pentheus does show such a 'not entirely uninformed interest in the mysteries', that quality of objective or distanced, even supercilious regard rather than hospitable embrace, is just the problem. This manner of viewing is Pentheus' mistake.

[63] ἐν ἀμίλλαισιν ἀνάγκας: Dodds: "at grips with oppression"; Seaford: "in struggles against constraint"; Roux, "luttant contre la menace d'emprisonnement de Penthée", for her *anagkē* must be quite literally understood as imprisonment; she cites 643 in support of that reading; Kirk: "in the toils of violent compulsion". Di Benedetto: "il nesso di ἀνάγκη con ἅμιλλα è dificile e intenso, con un implicito procedimento di personalizzazione dela 'necessità' che si oppone fattivamente alla resistenza da parte del soggetto;".

[64] προφήτας: mouthpieces, promoters. Commentators agree that this should not be taken as 'prophets' or 'interpreters'. Seaford: "proclaimers"; Dodds: "preachers". Cf. 211 where Kadmos offers to act as *prophētēs* with words for Teiresias, who is blind. There too it does not mean "interpreter" or "prophet" at all, but very plainly, and in keeping with the themes of the larger work, one who will register what is simply there to perceive, a transposer – from sight into words – not an interpreter.

Willingness and unwillingness is central where this god is concerned, who in his accounts is so typically resisted. The volitional friction of mortals is set against the frictionless character and comportment of Dionysus, in whom not only is there the promise of rest and peace, but who is characterized by this pronounced, divine effortlessness. In the first episode, Teiresias, the local expert on the estranged god who is, in reality, a son of Thebes, explains this quality of Dionysus' to Kadmos: "The god will lead us thence (to the mountain) with no toil", ὁ θεὸς ἀμοχθεὶ κεῖσε νῶιν ἡγήσεται, 194[65]. Dionysiac wish is Dionysiac command. Dionysus, speaking as the Stranger, tells the laborious king that "the daimōn himself will release me, whensoever I wish", λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω, 498, and hints at his identity as *Dionysos Lysios*.

The central episode, 576-861, with its opening sequence (the *Palastwunderszene*, the scene of the "palace miracles", as Dodds called it[66]) is a tableau of the unity of divine desire and consummation, set against mortal ineffectualness – the sprezzatura of Dionysus emphasizing the ineffectiveness of the worried human's will. Dionysus was bound, and now with the greatest of ease, with no effort at all, he is unbound, easily free, 612-17:

Ch. πῶς γὰρ οὔ; τίς μοι φύλαξ ἦν, εἰ σὺ συμφορᾶς τύχοις;
ἀλλὰ πῶς ἠλευθερώθης, ἀνδρὸς ἀνοσίου τυχών;
Di. αὐτὸς ἐξέσωσ' ἐμαυτὸν ῥαιδίως ἄνευ πόνου.[67]
Ch. οὐδέ σου συνῆψε χεῖρας δεσμίοισιν ἐν βρόχοις[68];
Di. ταῦτα καὶ καθύβρισ' αὐτόν, ὅτι με δεσμεύειν δοκῶν
οὔτ' ἔθιγεν οὔθ' ἥψαθ' ἡμῶν, ἐλπίσιν δ' ἐβόσκετο.

Ch. Of course! Who would be my guardian, if something befell you?
But how did you get free, after you fell into the possession of an impure man?
Di. I saved myself, easily, with no effort.
Ch. Didn't he tie up your hands in binding knots?
Di. Even in this did I make a mockery of him, in that thinking he was binding me
He neither touched nor grasped us, no he was feeding on thoughts, *elpides*.

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[65] On Dionysus' effortlessness generally see also Dodds on ἀμοχθεὶ 194: "the Dionysiac effortlessness of which we had a hint at 66; we shall meet again later. Cf. Ar. *Frogs* 402 where the *mustai* pray to Iacchos δεῖξον ὡς ἄνευ πόνου / πολλὴν ὁδὸν περαίνεις. This is something quite different from the commonplace that all things are easy to a god… it is a power communicated by this god to his worshippers."

[66] Dodds: 147; on this scene and its interpretation, see Castellani, 1976; Gakopolou, 2011.

[67] Cf. Dionysus' words at 498: λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω.

[68] With these *brochoi* "knots", "noose", which come to be another figuration of Pentheus' ineffectiveness, and indeed of human technique in the face of Dionysus generally, compare Agauē's ecstatic remarks that she has caught her prey "a … [wild animal? Cf. 1185-7] young son without *brochoi*", 1174-6: ἔμαρψα τόνδ' ἄνευ βρόχων / <×–⏑–⏑⏑–> νέον ἶνιν, / ὡς ὁρᾶν πάρα.

The mortal had run about in a frenzy, feeding wildly on thoughts ("hopes", "expectations") and thus "illusions": ἐλπίσιν δ' ἐβόσκετο[69]. A sweating, deranged and panting mess, he and the human context determined by his misjudged commands, are the very picture of futility (ἅπας δ' ἐν ἔργωι δοῦλος ἦν, μάτην πονῶν 626, πέπονθα δεινά, 642). He is like his Aeschylean precedent, the maddened Lykourgos, who no longer sees what he sees and cannot wish to do what he does. For, in the grip of Dionysus' avenging *mania,* Lykourgos, king of the Edonians, killed his son Dryas, thinking him a branch. Dionysus takes revenge on mortals by making them involuntary, the very instruments of their own undoing: tragic[70].

The god sits idly, *thassōn*, and calmly observes the scene, 618-22[71]:

> πρὸς φάτναις δὲ ταῦρον εὑρών, οὗ καθεῖρξ' ἡμᾶς ἄγων,
> τῶιδε περὶ βρόχους ἔβαλλε γόνασι καὶ χηλαῖς ποδῶν,
> θυμὸν ἐκπνέων, ἱδρῶτα σώματος στάζων ἄπο,
> χείλεσιν διδοὺς ὀδόντας· πλησίον δ' ἐγὼ παρὼν
> ἥσυχος θάσσων ἔλευσσον.[72]
>
> He found a bull at the mangers, where he had brought and shut us up,
> On this bull he tried throwing a noose, around its knees and hooves,
> Panting out his rage, he was dripping sweat from his body,
> Biting his lips; I was right nearby
> I watched, sitting there calmly.

Pentheus, who when we meet him first, is a flighty, excitable man, goes on to show himself intolerant and touchy and impatient of seers – a typical king and *tyrannos*[73]. In the scenes that take place within the palace walls, described in detail to the audience by the magically emancipated Dionysus, he has descended into a state of very unroyal labour, into a fever of

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[69] On *elpis*, see § 2.5 n. 249, § 3.1 p.136, § 4.3.9 n. 183, and *elpis* contrasted with *melein* see § 3.3.3 n. 169.

[70] See Aesch. Fr. 57-60. Apollodorus. Note how Pentheus is referred to as branch, sprig, offspring in: ἕλικα νεότομον 1170, τόδ' ἔρνος 1306, he is the shoot of Kadmos, the sower of humans who harvests a wretched crop (1313-15), who will end up an atrocious harvest, pulled off a branch where the god (himself of artificial insemination and 'harvesting' more than parturition, who was grafted on a mortal woman), has placed him, 1070-4. On the Lykourgeia of Aeschylus, see Ar. *Av.*276, Scholia; and Deichgräber, 1939, Jouan, 1992, Mureddu, 1994, 2000, West, 1990, Sommerstein, 2008; and see § 4.3.1 n. 106.

[71] Penthean ineffectualness, 625-28: ἦισσ' ἐκεῖσε κἄιτ' ἐκεῖσε, δμωσὶν Ἀχελῶιον φέρειν/ ἐννέπων, ἅπας δ' ἐν ἔργωι δοῦλος ἦν, μάτην πονῶν/ διαμεθεὶς δὲ τόνδε μόχθον, ὡς ἐμοῦ πεφευγότος/ ἵεται ξίφος κελαινὸν ἁρπάσας δόμων ἔσω. Note the telling echo of Dionysus' imperturbable "sitting", *thassōn*, here at 1076, 1111, where Pentheus' privileged viewing seat will not remain undisturbed for very long.

[72] See Orestes' episode of frenzy at Eur. *Or.* 253-65.

[73] Excitable: 212-14, 332, on *ptoein* "flit, flutter" see § 2.2.4 n. 153; Intolerant, impatient: 343-57; Discrediting of seers: 255-7; Reacting violently against a seer who does not say what he wishes to hear: 346-51; typical of the king or *tyrannos*: Agamemnon in Hom. *Il.* 26-32, 105-8; Oedipus in Soph. *OT* 380-403; Kreon in Soph. *Ant.* 1023—63. See also Dodds on 214, with Murray against Norwood.

humiliating hallucinations[74]. In a later part of this long episode, the penultimate one for Pentheus, 778-861, we find a king somewhat restored to himself volitionally, only to slip again, now gradually and somewhat mysteriously, like one hypnotized, under the spell of Dionysus' will. Here in the central palace scenes, we have heard tell of a mortal already susceptible to delusion, learning and yet still not learning the truth about his own desires and the meaning of the Stranger's easefulness, 640-43:

> Di. ῥαιδίως γὰρ αὐτὸν οἴσω, κἂν πνέων ἔλθηι μέγα·
> πρὸς σοφοῦ γὰρ ἀνδρὸς ἀσκεῖν σώφρον' εὐοργησίαν.
> Pe. πέπονθα δεινά· διαπέφευγέ μ' ὁ ξένος,
> ὃς ἄρτι δεσμοῖς ἦν κατηναγκασμένος.
>
> Di. Easily shall I bear him, though he come puffing all his might,
> For it belongs to a wise man to exercise healthy-minded sweetness of temper.
> Pe. I have suffered dreadful things, the *xenos* has escaped me,
> Who just before was tied up tightly in bonds.

Dionysus gives ease to hands which choose to surrender their will, (or have been compelled because of an original sin of refusal or non-recognition). The doffing of one's identity entails the abandonment of one's own desires. It means losing one's own will as personal property and, in *Bacchae*, accession to the god's higher (or lower) mode of desiring. Humans calculate and strive, they work towards ends, they are "awesome" *deinoi*, for their unique capacity to have purpose, *telos*, and to plan for and pursue their *telē*[75]. The having and pursuing of *telē* requires the capacity to project time as sequence and the identification of oneself as person having a future. The ordinary character of willing, just as the ordinary *telē* that belong to mortals, are subverted and even inverted by the new god who brings a different kind of consummation, establishing amongst mortals, alongside their time-bound *telē*, his time-transforming (initiatory) and transcending *teletai*[76].

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[74] Ominously ironic on Pentheus' kingly and solitary "labouring on behalf of the city" see 963-4: μόνος σὺ πόλεως τῆσδ' ὑπερκάμνεις, μόνος·/ τοιγάρ σ' ἀγῶνες ἀναμένουσιν οὓς ἐχρῆν.

[75] *Deinos*: humans awesome for their cognitive powers and their capacity for designing and anticipating, see Soph. *Ant.* 332-52; Aesch. *PV.* 436-71.

[76] *Teletai*: Dionysus establishes or "institutes" these "in order to become revealed" 22, the mortal who "knows the *teletai* of the gods" is blessed 74. Pentheus sees that the mission of the stranger has as its objective the introduction of these *teletai*: a danger to the city's young women at whom they are aimed 238, a worthless, innovation of the charlatan seer 260, *teletas ponēras*, a non-Greek arrival from abroad 465, which is peopled by barbarians who are inferior in sense to Greeks, 483. Rijksbaron points to the same thought expressed in Hdt. 1.60.3, but Herodotus seems to undergo the maturation and come to possess the versatility to take new perspectives, which Pentheus so tragically lacks, so Hdt. 3.38. On bacchic *teletai* in the post-Classical period see Burkert, 1993.

Eudaimōn ("blessed", "happy"[77]) is the man who escapes the sea and finds a haven; blessed too is the mortal who escapes toil, sings Dionysus' chorus of bacchants, 904-06:

> εὐδαίμων δ' ὃς ὕπερθε μόχθων
> ἐγένεθ'· ἕτερα δ' ἕτερος ἕτερον
> ὄλβωι καὶ δυνάμει παρῆλθεν.
>
> Blessed is he who has got beyond
> Labour, one man supercedes another
> Differently, in happiness and power.

This chorus of bacchants, a *thiasos*, band of foreign, female worshippers of the god, had entered the stage after the prologue singing an entrance hymn indistinguishable from the hymns sung in the cult of the god[78]. They celebrate the sweet labour of Dionysus, which requires none of that effort of will, none of the labour to which mortals in their earth-bound existence are ordinarily compelled, and of which Hesiod and Aeschylus gave such account in their work[79]. The bacchants themselves are set apart for both the collapse of themselves as agents of their own personal will and for the wondrous effortlessness of their mode of being[80]. When we hear about them, we hear that their natural state, when not deranged by outsiders, is one of rest, good order or "happy labour": *thaleros hypnos, eukosmia, hēdus ponos*[81].

Even their most gruesomely effortful act, ripping Pentheus' joints apart, is not entirely of their volition – *mikton*, they do it both voluntarily and not voluntarily – just as it is not accomplished by ordinary physical effort[82]. The god lends ease, *eumareia*, for the

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[77] On the meanings of *eudaimōn, olbos* and *makaros* (the choral song continues further on, 910-11: τὸ δὲ κατ' ἦμαρ ὅτωι βίοτος/ εὐδαίμων, μακαρίζω), see Rijksbaron: "I refer to De Heer (1969) . . . 'None of them (sc. the different types of 'happiness') 'is thought to be enduring, but εὐδαίμων is connected most intimately with the sense-comportment of permanence; the condition of being ὄλβιος is an aspect, a manifestation, of being εὐδαίμων.'" See also Thumiger, 2007: 171-85 on time, though there more specifically, from the point of view of characterization and time.

[78] Dodds: 71-2, "Both in form and content the ode seems to be fairly closely modelled on actual cult hymn", 71.

[79] 66-8: Βρομίωι πόνον ἡδὺν / κάματόν τ' / εὐκάματον, Βάκ-/ χιον εὐαζομένα. See also *Ion* 128-35 καλόν γε τὸν πόνον, ὦ /Φοῖβε, σοὶ πρὸ δόμων λατρεύ- / ω, τιμῶν μαντεῖον ἕδραν·/ κλεινὸς δ' ὁ πόνος μοι / θεοῖσιν δούλαν χέρ' ἔχειν, / οὐ θνατοῖς ἀλλ' ἀθανάτοις· / εὐφάμους δὲ πόνους / μοχθεῖν οὐκ ἀποκάμνω.

[80] For the maenads as producing all the rewards of normal agricultural labour without of any of the effort, see especially 699-711. A very example of that transcending of work evoked at 904-06.

[81] ηὗδον δὲ πᾶσαι σώμασιν παρειμέναι, 683, αἱ δ' ἀποβαλοῦσαι θαλερὸν ὀμμάτων ὕπνον, 692; θαῦμ' ἰδεῖν εὐκοσμίας, 693; ἔνθα μαινάδες/καθῆντ' ἔχουσαι χεῖρας ἐν τερπνοῖς πόνοις, 1052-53. Note that for Aristotle the involuntary is aligned with the unpleasant, the voluntary with pleasure, δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ τὰ μὲν ἀκούσια λυπηρὰ εἶναι, τὰ δὲ κατ' ἐπιθυμίαν ἡδέα, 1111a 31-2. The *ponos* to which mortals are compelled becomes "pleasant", *hēdus*, with Dionysus, 66: Βρομίωι πόνον ἡδὺν. On *ponos* see also § 3.3.10 n. 269.

[82] οὐχ ὑπὸ σθένους/ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς εὐμάρειαν ἐπεδίδου χεροῖν. 1127-28.

accomplishment of his purposes, just as he endows mortality with the gift that releases them from pain[83]. His gift is this release from the burdensome laws of nature at the price of the dissolution of one's own desires, or purposiveness. Freedom from care and effort is bought at the price of self-possession. Their minds are the ransom mortals must pay Dionysus for his cures.

The maenads are "willing" (in the weak sense) murderers of Pentheus; Agauē very eagerly (again, this "eagerness" is unchosen, so it is of a weak, merely "voluntary" kind") hunts down her son[84], who himself had been so "zealous for what he ought not to have been zealous after" (σπεύδοντά τ' ἀσπούδαστα, 913)[85]. They are willing but not *choosing* murderers. In their deeds – the most grievous deeds imaginable, the savage, utterly bestial killing of blood-kin – we have a very case study in that which interests Aristotle on agency, one in which acts are committed *in spite of oneself*. This fissure opened up in human subjects, a space between acts and the intention or inadvertency of their commission, is a fine one. Out of it issues the conscious and the unconscious, all that is sweetest and all that is most dreadful[86] and the very material of Tragic Drama. Dionysus' *mania* is a hijacking or abduction of that quality which we call "self" – identity, personhood, agency. Hence in his art, Attic Drama, the recurrent problem is that of self-interest (whether only apparent or in fact also authentic) and its difficulty of location: since the self is itself so evanescent, so hard to pin down, inaccessible and hard "to know"; and that above all to its "owner"[87].

Compulsion, forms of control, service and even enslavement to the god are central questions of Dionysus' world[88]. Fundamental questions of autonomy and agency, of compromised agency and the nature of authority over ones's self and one's own desires, one's bearing to mortal and divine others – these all constantly underlie the action and motivations of this and other Attic tragedies. Surrender to Dionysus is the service he requires, and this is a god who renders to humans the very sweetest gifts: wine, joyful solidarity, peace, rest,

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[83] οἴνου τέρψιν ἄλυπον, 423; βροτείω τ' ἔχειν ἄλυπος βίος, 1004.

[84] 1087-1114, where for example: ἀγμῶν τ' ἐπήδων θεοῦ πνοαῖσιν ἐμμανεῖς 1094., κρεῖσσον γὰρ ὕψος τῆς προθυμίας ἔχων 1101.

[85] And in his state of enfeebled volition he in turn thinks that he is hunting down the fluttering birds, that to his own fluttering mind, the bacchants are, 957-8: καὶ μὴν δοκῶ σφας ἐν λόχμαις ὄρνιθας ὡς/ λέκτρων ἔχεσθαι φιλτάτοις ἐν ἔρκεσιν.

[86] δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος, 861.

[87] On the misidentification of self-interest compare for example the problems in Euripides' Polyphontes in *Cresphontes* Eur. fr. 452; in *Chrysippus* Laius is incapable of governing his desire for the boy Chrysippus and laments the "evil godsend for humans, when one knows what is good and does not do it", Eur. fr. 841. Mistaking money – *misthos* – as having a value that it does not in fact have, will typically also lead to having to pay the dreadful wages of a misconstrued self-interest: such is the venal reckoning Pentheus attributes to Teiresias, 255-7, but which only reflects his own overestimation of the value and power of lucre, so that he offers money to the god to bribe him illicitly to see the bacchants, 812: μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δοὺς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν.

[88] *Therapeia*: on service and mutual amenability with Dionysus see § 3.3.1 n. 132, § 3.3.2 n. 49, and Wildberg, 1999/2000.

refreshment[89]. He brings to humankind also dance, music and prophecy, thus completing and elaborating the suite of specifically human and civilized – *politika* – capacities, established by the philanthropic Prometheus[90].

All of Dionysus' gifts entail a surrender of volitional agency, but in turn they give access to the magnified kind of agency which belongs to the god. They enable a binding together of discrete persons into one person, one 'body corporate' – a phrase betrayed by the very bodilessness of that which it usually describes – that transcends time and individual death. A Dionysiac life of calm and peace endures and "holds together houses"[91]:

> ὁ δὲ τᾶς ἡσυχίας
> βίοτος καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν
> ἀσάλευτόν τε μένει καὶ
> ξυνέχει δώματα· πόρσω
> γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον-
> τες ὁρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι.
>
> But the life of peace
> And mindfulness
> Remains unshaken
> And holds together houses, far off
> In the skies though they dwell
> The heavenly ones see the doings of mortals.

The unanimity of the chorus, the conjoining of many voices and faces into one, is itself the gift of Dionysus. It is a model of the healthy *polis*, the strange, uniquely human, nearly divine capacity to generate and regularly re-institute an identity, an objective person who is not one subject, but in which many subjects can conjointly partake. Here is the 'spiritual'

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[89] 278-85. Wine is the highly recursive gift of Dionysus: he gifts it to mortals πῶμ' ηὗρε κἀσηνέγκατο / θνητοῖς 279-80; he is the wine and mortals pour him out for the gods, οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγώς 284; and using it its own reward, ὥστε διὰ τοῦτον τἀγάθ' ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν 285. On Dionysus' as benefactor see Henrichs, 1975; and Cabrera, 2013.

[90] As Prometheus established certain capabilities by his gift of fire, which is the mother of all gifts (cf. Aesch. *PV* 506 πᾶσαι τέχναι βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως), symbol of mind, so does Dionysus "institute", *kathistanai* (21-2) his gifts and practices. Invention of drums: the Korybantes "invented" the drums, a bacchic gift, 121-5; Wine: Dionysus bequeaths his wine which is also himself, his own intoxicating presence, 278-84. It is the only gift that relieves humans (οὐδ' ἔστ' ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων, 284) from just those capacities for devising schemes and tools, the prosthetics of practical intention, which are the gifts of Prometheus, see Aesch. *PV* 436-71.

[91] In just the way that the House of Kadmos fails to be held together, but cf. 1308, where pathetically the destroyed Pentheus is said to have 'held together the house of Kadmos' and to have been the 'joy of the *polis*', 1308-10: ὦι δῶμ' ἀνέβλεφ', ὃς συνεῖχες, ὦ τέκνον, /τοὐμὸν μέλαθρον, παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς, / πόλει τε τάρβος ἦσθα·. It has been a different kind of joy, a pride in a different relation that Dionysus has wanted Thebes to feel.

articulation of the Atheneians' *Thesean* synoecism[92]. Thebes in *Bacchae* has not found this health. She is the nurse of Kadmeians, τροφοὶ Θῆ-/βαι 105-6, who like the mother that destroys its child, or the maenads who stream in frenzy out of their house and city-walls, has abandoned its present-time and thus its future. The House of Kadmos has come toppling down. This city has been a disastrous project in transgenerational personhood. Thebes has failed to sing and surrender and view itself in Dionysus' way. The community that loves peace and knows itself and therefore what is really in its interests and what those ought to be, that community endures over generations.[93]

Aristotle had been reading Euripides. He counters the Socratic notion of wickedness being a matter of ignorance, something ultimately always committed in spite of oneself[94]. He calls *geloia*, "ridiculous, laughable", the kind of compulsions to outrage adduced in exculpation by protagonists in Tragedy, singling out as example the *Alcmeon in Corinth*, which was performed alongside *Bacchae* in 405 BCE[95]. There are dreadful things – *ta deinotata* – to which persons simply would not be compelled, according to Aristotle. One could only ever kill one's mother, (and we may presume, one's son) he implies, if one did not *know* she were such: *d'après leurs conditions internes, les différentes modalités de l'action*, as Vernant wrote[96]. Ignorance and dreadful things: this is the fundamental *Problematik* in *Bacchae*.

It is a work in which internal conditions so manifestly determine the modality of action. Here knowledge, states of mind, bearing, intention, choices to recognize and not recognize, have primary place. The effacement of the faculties of deliberation, and thus of choice, in *mania*; the gradual enchantment or *thelxis* of the king, a process invested with great prominence as such in the drama[97]; his casting under what Euripides' Dionysus calls a "light

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[92] See Parker, 1996: 10-28.

[93] See Seaford in *Masks*, 115-46 and Seaford, 1994. Also Bloch, 1992, on the politics of religious ritual, who argues that rituals functions to knit together the forces of vitality (youth) and transcendence (age), resolving tensions that form an existential threat and ensuring both the creative energy of a culture, its containment by institutions and its endurance over time.

[94] See for example Pl. *Prt.* 345d – e; *Meno* 77 – 8; *Grg.* 475e, 509e; *Leg.* 860c – 863e. Cf. for Aristotle's rejection of the Platonic paradox that no one is wicked voluntarily Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113b 3-1114b 25, where "virtue and vice are in our power", and not a question only of knowledge and ignorance.

[95] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110a 26-9: ἔνια δ' ἴσως οὐκ ἔστιν ἀναγκασθῆναι, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἀποθανετέον παθόντι τὰ δεινότατα· καὶ γὰρ τὸν Εὐριπίδου Ἀλκμαίωνα γελοῖα φαίνεται τὰ ἀναγκάσαντα μητροκτονῆσαι. On this lost play, and how it may have complemented *Bacchae* and *Iphigenia at Aulis,* see Hall's essay in Stuttard: 11-28. For a formative discussion of the two plays, by a scholar who established the ritualist parameters for the interpretation of *Bacchae* in the century, see Murray, 1913: 163-95.

[96] ". . . Aristote élabore une doctrine de l'acte moral qui représente, dans la philosophie grecque classique, l'effort d'analyse le plus poussé pour distinguer, *d'après leurs conditions internes, les différentes modalités de l'action*.", my italics, Vernant 48-9, in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972.

[97] Esp. 810-61 and its spectacular consummation in 913-76.

madness" *elaphran lussan*, 851[98]; Pentheus' inability to pierce the mist of entrancement that enwraps the mind of his mother and the maenads, 1115-21; and then the remarkable depiction of a slow, gradual return to consciousness of Agauē, who has by now killed her own son 1263-96: all this suggests a fascination with the absolute centrality of the mind and its states, a central preoccupation with the invisible threads, made momentarily manifest, that link subjects to their actions in more or less meaningful, moral agency.

What the maenads do in the culmination of *Bacchae* looks completely involuntary in Aristotelian terms. The *archē* is Dionysus, it comes from outside of themselves. It is not entirely "in their power"[99]: ὁ θεὸς εὐμάρειαν ἐπεδίδου χεροῖν, 1128. It is involuntary "in the abstract", for while "no one would choose any such act in itself"[100], to commit the atrocity the Theban women are said to do, they are figured always as the very portrait of happy willingness and desire after Dionysus. In their leaping, rushing – *thoazein*, *skirtān*[101]– character the bacchants are the model of that enhanced eagerness, the self-abnegated fundamentalism, which is religious zeal. Their only work is the unreflective commission of Dionysiac desire.

[98] On this "light madness", ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν, 851, Dodds: "a madness of inconstancy, 'a dizzy fantasy', rather than (Paley, Wilamowitz) 'a light attack of madness'. So Phocylides fr. 9 fr. 9 speaks of people who appear *saophrones* but are really *elaphronóoi.*" Radke: 143-53, makes some good points on this "leichter Wahn": "Dionysos wünscht nicht alle Rachegöttinen und Furien auf Pentheus herab, sonder gerade soviel an Verblendung, wie für den nächsten Schritt seines Planes erforderlich ist.", but her argument that this 'light frenzy' is something proper to Pentheus, not coming from Dionysus but only intensified, as it were, for the god's purposes is not entirely persuasive. πρῶτα δ' ἔκστησον φρενῶν, / ἐνεὶς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν, 850-1, is fairly definite: "Put him out of his mind and put in him a light frenzy". Dionysus is putting something in him from outside and that also resembles the weakened volition that has always been the mark of Pentheus, in spite of himself. Leinieks: 81, 115, 257, parses it simply as 'delusion' (flattening out the difference between 'frenzy' and 'delusion' – but frenzy is never a static state, delusion can be a purely internal or immobile condition: like the difference between laughing and smiling), "At 851 *eu phronein* is implicitly contrasted with delusion", though it is not implicit. Nevertheless, dentifying things *only* contrastively, can drain them of their strong and nuanced colours, on *Lussa* "Frenzy", personified in Aeschylus *Xantriai*, see § 4.2 n. For a useful discussion of *Lussa* in *Bacchae* and Tragedy, see Di Benedetto p. 442. I find *elaphra*, 'light' all important here. A 'light frenzy', is a mark of the god's subtlety, his lightness of touch, the delicacy that is so powerfully offset by the atrocity of maenadic frenzy and the god's vengefulness. This a context of blurred lines, gradual transitions, everywhere the prospect of ambiguity is raised as if human life were somehow lived in that state described by Diotima in Plato's *Symposium*, somewhere between ignorance and knowledge, Pl. *Sym.* 202a.

[99] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1110a 16-17 ἐν αὐτῷ ἐστίν ·ὧν δ' ἐν αὐτῷ ἡ ἀρχή, ἐπ' αὐτῷ καὶ τὸ πράττειν καὶ μή.

[100] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1110a 18-19 ἑκούσια δὴ τὰ τοιαῦτα, ἁπλῶς δ' ἴσως ἀκούσια· οὐδεὶς γὰρ ἂν ἕλοιτο καθ' αὑτὸ τῶν τοιούτων οὐδέν.

[101] *Thoazein*: 65, 219. *Skirtān:* 167-9, 445-6. Rushing, leaping, dionysiac joy is surrender to Dionysiac authority, a "surrender" which, in its healthy form, is not simply passive or by default, but active will.

2.2.1.2 *Heterorrepēs*

For how could he not know himself?[102]

By "particular cases", must we adjudicate matters, on the spectrum of *akousion – hekousion*, Aristotle argues. And here in *Bacchae* is a complex, very particular case. It was a drama performed alongside the *Alcmeon at Corinth* and the *Iphigenia at Aulis*. In those other plays too, kin are made, apparently "willingly", to do what most disgusts the will under normal circumstances: to kill their own. This trilogy, performed posthumously in 405 BCE, might well have been advertised "Dreadful things": τὰ δεινότατα. Agamemnon is compelled by a seer's interpretation, which he may choose to ignore, to sacrifice his loving child[103]. He wavers and we are given to see the process of wavering, of preponderance now this way, now that, exhibiting that quality of decision that belongs to mortals and which corresponds to the quality of alternate evaluation of their acts by *Zeus heterorrepēs*, as he is described by Aeschylus[104].

A savage divinity has made a humanly repellent demand. Humans negotiate the circumstances, revealing their characters through the values they claim to have and wish to have and the values, that through their actions, they in fact ultimately reveal. Choice and its deliberation, or the renunciation of choice and of deliberation (itself of course a choice, the choice of passivity), is most unfalsifiably evident in what mortals finally desire most, the wish that becomes effective. This is what Harry Frankfurt called *effective values*, viz. the ones that are actualized[105]. Character is defined by desire and intention. In situations of choice

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[102] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111a. 3-8: πῶς γὰρ ἑαυτόν γε;

[103] Calchas' prophesying Aesch. *Ag*. 121-38, Agamemnon does not blame the seer, Aesch. *Ag*. 186: μάντιν οὔτινα ψέγων; but is faced with a choice, however aporetic he feels, he recognizes the dreadful options Aesch. *Ag*. 205-17; vacillates between impure alternatives A. *Ag*. 219-20: φρενὸς πνέων δυσσεβῆ τροπαίαν / ἄναγνον; and then resolves on how he shall proceed τόθεν / τὸ παντότολμον φρονεῖν μετέγνω Aesch. *Ag*. 220-1; he himself "puts on the yoke-strap of compulsion" ἀνάγκας ἔδυ λέπαδνον, Aesch. *Ag*. 218. In Eur. *IA* 87-114 it is even more pronounced: the sacrifice that the seer has said is required is not forced upon Agamemnon, the entire work revolves on the axis of deliberation, the dilemma whether to be unspeakably ruthless and save face or to be humane and go home, so e.g. see Agamemnon's own explanation of his predicament, he is a man in profoundest conflict between alternatives, which it will be for him to ultimatley choose. On his willing choice of sacrifice, at least initially, the blamelessness of anyone but himself, see also Eur. *IA* 358-64, note esp. Agamemnon's overjoyed reaction to the news that killing his daughter will make the Trojan expedition feasible again and his delighted devising of a pretext, *prophasis*, 359-62: ἡσθεὶς φρένας / ἄσμενος θύσειν ὑπέστης παῖδα· καὶ πέμπεις ἑκών, / οὐ βίαι – μὴ τοῦτο λέξῃς – σῇι δάμαρτι παῖδα σὴν / δεῦρ' ἀποστέλλειν, Ἀχιλλεῖ πρόφασιν ὡς γαμουμένην. But contrast the exhausted and desperate derogation of prophets by the Atreides at Eur. *IA* 520-1. On seers see also § 2.2.1.1 p. 61 n. 73, § 4.3.7 n.166, § 5.2.2 n. 13.

[104] Aesch. *Supp*. 402-4: ἀμφοτέροις ὁμαίμων τάδ' ἐπισκοπεῖ / Ζεὺς ἑτερορρεπής, νέμων εἰκότως/ ἄδικα μὲν κακοῖς, ὅσια δ' ἐννόμοις., cf. also Hom. *Od*. 4. 236-7, where Helen, who has put her *pharmakon* in the wine she is giving her guests, this sometimes sweet sometimes fearsome gift of Dionysus, begins speaking mentioning Zeus "who sometimes gives out good, sometimes evil; he can do anything": ἀτὰρ θεὸς ἄλλοτε ἄλλῳ / Ζεὺς ἀγαθόν τε κακόν τε διδοῖ· δύναται γὰρ ἅπαντα.

[105] For Frankfurt's notion of "effective desires", see § 3.2.2 p. 147.

between alternatives, our actual desire in fact (as opposed to what an individual thought or wished or pretended its desires were) is revealed. We may not always be able to act on our desires or realize them, but our acts very often declare what our desires have been, often in spite of ourselves. Tragedy is an imitation of actions. Desires are only ever visible as effects or inferrable from utterance. These require connecting to the intentional causes we must infer. Acts are eloquent, but what they express is not definite. Actors think their motivations more efficacious than they may be, or they lie or circumstances confuse the real causes of events. Drama is founded upon the indeterminate space between desires or intentions, which are many, and acts, which are singular.

Abandoning the mission to Troy is possible, but it will mean losing face before the army of Greeks and before the Trojan abductors of the Greek woman. The sacrifice to Artemis is a pretext for that human drama. The idea of authoritative demands being pretexts, which undermine those authorities is strong in the drama[106]. *Iphigenia at Aulis* is a dramatization of deliberation and choice. This is a conclusion not easy to escape, considering the relative space given to the problem of mortal choosing and the elaborately developed social psychology of desire in the play, (the predicament of the Argives being envisaged as a moral problem of affect and loyalty, of human relations) and that space given to the exegesis of divine demands on humanity. To Clytemnestra it is certainly not clear that the gods exist at all, but she has no doubts that there are wicked and cruel acts and deceitful persons[107]. Agamemnon in Euripides is a man in conflict with himself, so is he presented from the outset, writing and tearing up again his letters, unresolved and tortured by deliberation before an abominable choice which is one that goes to the very nature of his identity: is he a father and husband or a heroic "face" that derives its values from the *doxa*, judgement, not of kin but of fellows?[108]

Hamillaisin anagkas, "in the struggles of compulsion": the old retainer seeks to draw Agamemnon one way in his wrestling with himself, while Menelaus attacks the old servant and wants to draw him the other way. Then Menelaus, himself, is changed in his view on things, for he sees his brother's tears, the evidence of the inwardness of his human

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[106] Pretext: *prophasis*, see Eur. *IA* 362, 884, 1180, 1434.

[107] Eur. *IA* 1034-5: εἰ δ' εἰσὶ <συνετοὶ> θεοί, δίκαιος ὢν ἀνὴρ/ἐσθλῶν κυρήσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ πονεῖν;

[108] On the fear of what the Greeks will say of him and the loss of reputation and fear of reprisal as ultimately determining motive, Eur. *IA* 506-42. The fear is a combination of fear for reputation and fear for what Odysseus may incite the Greeks to do to him if he fails to sacrifice Iphigenia, 531-7. Agamemnon feels he has reached an impasse and that the gods have desired this (ὦ τάλας ἐγώ, / ὡς ἠπόρημαι πρὸς θεῶν τὰ νῦν τάδε Eur. *IA* 536-7) but if impasse he has reached, it is through a projection of what Odysseus may hypothetically do based on a reading of Odysseus' character, motivation and peculiar skills. Euripides leaves it open as to whether this interpretation of possible future scenarios is not itself a *prophasis* that Agamemnon, as is typical of Euripidean characters, is giving himself in order to permit himself the 'easier', more selfish option.

'subjectness', and feels pity. Remembering himself as related to others by affective bonds, he ceases to scheme and deceive and speaks "from my heart", not with ulterior, calculating motive. He is no longer *deinos* towards his brother but *symmachos*, an allied heart[109]: οὐκ ἐς σὲ δεινός, εἰμὶ δ' οὔπερ εἶ σὺ νῦν[110]. Agamemnon will again change his mind and cede to the baser motivation of regard for reputation. Odysseus, the supreme utilitarian, is in the background, haunting the play. He offers yet another face of the ruthless instrumentalization of others and relations[111]. Even the initially innocuous and admirable Achilles shows momentarily an Odyssean, readily instrumentalist face[112]. He reveals himself unattractively mindful, even in these extreme circumstances, of his own face[113]. The outrage of Clytemnestra and the touching willingness of Iphigenia herself to die in service: everything in *Iphigenia at Aulis* serves to illuminate the problem and to handle it as the fundamental one of the "deep desires", τὸ χρῄζον, of mortals in their social predicaments. What they are, what they are thought to be and what deceptions and pretexts are used to dissemble them – this is the matter of Euripides' drama.

Tragedy is precisely the elaboration of such particular cases in which the nature and volitional character of various actions in a very great number of predicaments are presented for judgement.[114] Pentheus' murder *is* done by reason of ignorance and it *does* produce very great "pain and regret"[115]. These are the criteria, according to Aristotle, by which we adjudge an act involuntary. Dionysus and the Dionysiac inspired are beyond or without *mochthos*, toil. In Aristotle the *mochtheros* is the "wicked man", wretched or base. Such a man is ignorant of what he ought to do and not do, how he ought to value: he has not the Dionysiac *sophia* and *sōphrosynē* through which the work of life is redefined. By this *hamartia*, error, he becomes unjust and bad[116]. What is decisive in judging an act involuntary is not ignorance of advantage, undiscerned self-interest, nor ignorance of 'generals', but "ignorance of particulars" ἡ ἄγνοια … ἡ καθ' ἕκαστα. "Pity and sympathy" depend on these, for it is ignorance of the nature of a particular situation that determines whether acts are involuntary[117].

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[109] Eur. *IA* 473-503.

[110] Eur. *IA* 480.

[111] Eur. *IA* 522-31.

[112] Eur. *IA* 965-7.

[113] Eur. *IA* 1015-23.

[114] The particular details will differ, but what is common is ignorance of the precise nature of the "circumstances and end" of a given action, κυριώτατα δ' εἶναι δοκεῖ ἐν οἷς ἡ πρᾶξις καὶ οὗ ἕνεκα Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a.18-19.

[115] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110b 18-20, *Bacchae* 1296-1387.

[116] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110b 28-30 ἀγνοεῖ μὲν οὖν πᾶς ὁ μοχθηρὸς ἃ δεῖ πράττειν καὶ ὧν ἀφεκτέον. καὶ διὰ τὴν τοιαύτην ἁμαρτίαν ἄδικοι καὶ ὅλως κακοὶ γίνονται. Cf. Dionysus' dark encouragement to the deranged Pentheus at *Ba.* 924: νῦν δ' ὁρᾶις ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν, with which it stands in sharp contrast 358-9, 506.

[117] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a.1-2 ἐν τούτοις γὰρ καὶ ἔλεος καὶ συγγνώμη· ὁ γὰρ τούτων τι ἀγνοῶν ἀκουσίως πράττει.

Aristotle distinguishes between acts committed out of ignorance and merely in ignorance, ignorantly. Drunkenness, passion, anger (μεθύων ἢ ὀργιζόμενος) are instances in which a man may be said to act "not knowingly but in ignorance", οὐκ εἰδὼς δὲ ἀλλ' ἀγνοῶν[118]. For Pentheus, one may say, the problem with the bacchic revels introduced into Thebes is their introduction of intolerable states of involuntariness, for which there will be account but no responsibility. For him the *orgia* of Dionysus are orgiastic in the modern, pejorative sense; they are the effects of a cause which is base human motivation. Drunkenness and passion are just what he thinks he detects.[119] To Pentheus' mind there is an irresponsibility about acts with no secured agents. That irresponsibility is culpable. He believes that he has penetrated mere human desirousness, under the pretext of a profound, pious motivation.

Essential to a thoroughgoing intentionality is having a particular end in mind, as the object of prior thinking. We feel pity for the maenad or the mad, *mainomenos*, for the helplessness of their actions, the obvious diminution of their responsibility. We feel differently for the figure who puts wine to his or her lips and then becomes deranged, or for the hero who is in the grip of an intelligible passion or rage, *mēnis*, from which we think he may be dissuaded. *Peithō*, 'persuasion', and *logos*, 'reason', lose their purchase on minds, to various degrees. These are also degrees of voluntariness: *akousion* and *hekousion*. Only the *compos mentis* can be prevailed upon by reason or persuasion, to see others as subjects "like self". Through self-reflexivity alone persons begin to look differently upon their own instincts and desires and look sympathetically upon the condition of others. Deliberation may be seen as such an internal weighing up, persuading and prevailing upon the several parts of self[120]. The bacchants have been "zombies", mere vehicles of a will not their own, incapable of recognizing others or self *qua* selves. Their actions have been those of vacuous beings, emptied of personhood, objects through which the delegated agency of the god has been distributed. Accordingly, individual personality and speech have been displaced in them by spontaneous song, war-cry, ululation, outcry and vocative summoning.

Aristotle, as example, lists a range of particular instances of the possible "objects of ignorance", giving a description resonant for the reader of Tragedy, and peculiarly in this instance, of *Bacchae*:

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[118] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1110b. 24 -7.

[119] 215-25, 233-8, 353-4, 453-9, 487.

[120] See Gill, 1996 on the self in dialogue; and Snell, 1928, on deliberation and only apparent deliberation in Homer; also Wolff, 1929 in reply to Snell, 1928; and against modern notions of interiority and autonomy, Rivier, 1968; Vernant, 1972.

> ἴσως οὖν οὐ χεῖρον διορίσαι αὐτά, τίνα καὶ πόσα ἐστί, **τίς τε δὴ καὶ τί καὶ περὶ τί ἢ ἐν τίνι πράττει**, ἐνίοτε δὲ καὶ τίνι, οἷον ὀργάνῳ, καὶ ἕνεκα τίνος, οἷον σωτηρίας, καὶ πῶς, οἷον ἠρέμα ἢ σφόδρα. ἅπαντα μὲν οὖν ταῦτα οὐδεὶς ἂν ἀγνοήσειε **μὴ μαινόμενος,** δῆλον δ' ὡς οὐδὲ τὸν πράττοντα· **πῶς γὰρ ἑαυτόν γε**;
>
> Perhaps it is just as well, therefore, to determine their nature and number (of circumstances and objects of action). A man may be ignorant, then, of *who he is, what he is doing, what or whom he is acting on*, and sometimes also what (e.g. what instrument) he is doing it with, and to what end (e.g. he may think his act will conduce with someone's safety), and how he is doing it (e.g. whether gently or violently). Now of all of these no one could be ignorant *unless he were mad*, and evidently also he could not be ignorant of the agent; *for how could he not know himself?*[121]

Dionysus declares, as we saw above, that the young king does not know what [kind of] life he is living, what he is doing – *drān* – nor who he is: οὐκ οἶσθ' †ὅτι ζῇς† οὐδ' ὃ δρᾶις οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ.[122] One could scarcely be in such a state "unless he were mad", says Aristotle and that indeed is the condition to which he is succumbing. It is not full-blown madness with Pentheus but "light", *elaphra*: this is a context of process, gradation and spectrum rather than mutually precluding oppositions. As wine teaches what sobriety and lucidity mean, so we the audience learn, through the detailed picture of descent into and recovery from Dionysiac *mania*, what it means not to know oneself. Mortals act "in spite of themselves" and so we learn that self-interest is not self-evident. We begin to see in this blurring of voluntariness,

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[121] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111a. 3-8, my italics.

[122] 506: οὐκ οἶσθ' †ὅτι ζῇς† οὐδ' ὃ δρᾶις οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ: This line to which my argument so often returns is problematic as can be seen. The manuscripts' [LP] ὅτι ζῇς is rejected by many. Dodds gives a fulsome review of the problem and its posited solutions, ad loc.: "'You know not what your life is (?), nor the thing you do, nor what you are'. If ὅτι ζῇς is sound, the sense must, I think, be, as Prof. Fraenkel suggests to me, 'You do not realize your status as mere mortal'. . . By ὅστις εἶ Dion. means 'what your position is (in relation to me)': the man mistakes himself for the god's master . . . There remains considerable doubt about the first clause, which is unfortunately not preserved in the papyrus. . . the words are decidely obscure". Dodds runs through the many corrections that have been proposed for †ὅτι ζῇς† and their relative unlikelihood or plausibility. Dodds initially thought "least bad" ὃ τείσεις (Schoene's ὃ τίσεις): thus "what price you shall pay". Ultimately (in the 2nd edition, 1960: 141 ft.1) he concurred with Campbell's <ἔθ'> ὅτι τι φῄς (*CQ* xlix, 1956), i.e. "yet what you are saying". Roux accepts Dodd's accession to Campbell's suggestion and prints it in her text instead of †ὅτι ζῇς† found in LP, accepting his argument for a copyist's error (the dropping out of ΕΘ after the ΣΘ of οἶσθ'). Roux: "Penthée ne sait pas ce qu'il dit (une absurdité!) lorsqu'il se prétend κυριώτερος [505]; il ne sait pas ce qu'il fait (un sacrilège) quand il ordonne d'enchaîner l'étranger; et ses actes prouvent qu'il ne sait pas ce qu'il est (un simple mortel; cf. 199)." Despite his reservations, it must be said that Madvig's ὅ τι χρῇις (and Wilamowitz' supportive comparison with Hippocrates *Ep.* 17 οὔτε ὅ τι θέλει οἶδε οὔτε ὅ τι ἔρδει) to argue for a Pentheus who does not know "what you want" would be very consistent with the consistent thematization of his desire and his ignorance as primary problem. Murray and Kirk retained LP's †ὅτι ζῇς†. I find Kirk's solution not unacceptable, Kirk: "You do not know what your life is – neither what you are doing nor who you are".

that the problem of intentionality recapitulates the profound problem of identity, that personal agency is deeply entangled with value.[123]

The theme of the parentage of Dionysus, which has gone unrecognized – for him the crucial point to be made is the historical fact of his conception and double birth, to Semelē *and* to his father Zeus[124] – is set off by Agauē's supposed killing of a wild animal, which is in fact her own, unrecognized child[125]. Agauē will not recognize her own progeny, neither his face nor his voice, when he calls out to her at the climax of the action, 1115-21. Zeus establishes the pattern of tragic scenarios when he sires the god of theatre, for in a voluntary act which he would never choose, he has blasted Semelē, his mortal lover, to death[126]. Hera, who witnesses the constant bastardizing of Zeus with fertile mortals uses her devices to take revenge. Ovid tells the story of Hera's disguisement as the crone Beroe and her persuading of Semelē to wish for herself that which she ought never to desire, viz. to receive Zeus in a form unsuitable for mortal intercourse[127]. Hera is the mother of a kind of distributed agency; she uses *mechanē*, machination and deception, *dolos*, to induce or bring to birth her own will through the instrumentalization of the unknowing desirousness of others.

> τὸ δὲ λέγειν ὡς οὐδεὶς ἑκὼν πονηρὸς οὐδ' ἄκων μακάριος ἔοικε τὸ μὲν ψευδεῖ τὸ δ' ἀληθεῖ· μακάριος μὲν γὰρ οὐδεὶς ἄκων, ἡ δὲ μοχθηρία ἑκούσιον. ἢ τοῖς γε νῦν εἰρημένοις ἀμφισβητητέον, καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον οὐ φατέον ἀρχὴν εἶναι οὐδὲ γεννητὴν τῶν πράξεων ὥσπερ καὶ τέκνων.[128]
>
> The saying that 'no one is voluntarily wicked nor involuntarily happy' seems to be partly false and partly true; for no one is involuntarily happy, but wickedness *is* voluntary. Or else we shall have to dispute what has just been said, and deny that man is moving principle or begetter of his actions, as of children".

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[123] His further examples are quite typically taken from Tragedy, the art of intentions, half-intentions, unconscious intentions. Referring to the charge – recorded by Heraclides Ponticus in the first book of his *On Homer* – against Aeschylus that he had revealed the mysteries in his plays (*Toxotides*, *Hiereiai*, *Iphigenia*, *Oidipous*) and also to the Merope of Euripides' *Cresphontes* Aristotle wrote: οὐκ εἰδέναι ὅτι ἀπόρρητα ἦν, ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος τὰ μυστικά . . .οἰηθείη δ' ἄν τις καὶ τὸν υἱὸν πολέμιον εἶναι ὥσπερ ἡ Μερόπη . . . 1111a. 10 -13, cf. also Arist. *Poet.* 1454 a 4-9 κράτιστον δὲ τὸ τελευταῖον, λέγω δὲ οἷον ἐν τῷ Κρεσφόντῃ ἡ Μερόπη μέλλει τὸν υἱὸν ἀποκτείνειν, ἀποκτείνει δὲ οὔ, ἀλλ' ἀνεγνώρισε, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἰφιγενείᾳ ἡ ἀδελφὴ τὸν ἀδελφόν, καὶ ἐν τῇ Ἕλλῃ ὁ υἱὸς τὴν μητέρα ἐκδιδόναι μέλλων ἀνεγνώρισεν.

[124] 1-9, 26-34, 41-2, 1340-1, 1349.

[125] Note how this configuration is the theme and variation of the trilogy: *Alcmeon*, and *Iphigenia at Aulis* and echoed in the plots of *Orestes* and *Chresphontes*, two youths who return disguised to their homes to take revenge on family. Chresphontes nearly suffers the fate of Dryas, when his mother, not recognizing him, nearly murders him with an axe, see Nauck[2] *TGF* Eur. frr. 449-59. Also Hall in Stuttard: 11-28.

[126] 6-9, 287-91.

[127] See Ov. *Met.* 3. 273-291 and [Apollod.] 3.4.3, see also below § 6.3.3 n. 86. A papyrus fragment, *TrGF* 3 [Radt] Aesch. frr. 168 contains verses spoken by Hera in the disguise of a mendicant priestess, which are ascribed to Aeschylus' *Semelē*, see Sommerstein, 2008; Hadjicosti, 2006.

[128] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1113b 14-19.

Zeus is the involuntary author of Dionysus. His son in turn is a god who comes to testify to the truth of his own authorship and thus his authority. He does this by bastardizing human acts, so that their deeds become offspring unrecognizable to their own parents, of mixed intentional parentage. Actions are not like sensations, they are not passively experienced: case by case, we see that mortals are collaborative in their deeds, collaborative with themselves, and for all the mixture of knowledge and ignorance, of responsibility and irresponsibility, for all the complexities of imputation, we attribute agency to them. Thus men (as private individuals and as public legislators) "punish and take vengeance upon those who do wicked acts (unless they have acted under compulsion or as a result of ignorance for which they are not themselves responsible) while they honour those who do noble acts"[129].

For a competitive people, for whom excellence and conspicuousness for accomplishments and qualities is a value, so fundamental to their ethics, the attribution of honours as well as errors is of singular importance. It is because humans attribute merit that they also impute responsibility. Contradictions in supposing there to be an innate quality of hereditary excellence have become too obvious to ignore by the 5th Century. The well-born do not necessarily act well. This is not far from the recognition that a low-born may be made of noble stuff. The contingency of things will become ever more manifest. The problem of value becomes ever more pressing: what do humans deserve? We regale them with prizes and wreaths for their accomplishments, the consummation of their goals in contests with others. This must mean that they are open to blame, as responsible, as knowable for their misdeeds as for their deeds. So, perhaps, the 'noble' warrior of Homer is also the "irreproachable man", *amumōn*[130].

For Aristotle on agency, as for Dionysus in Euripides, the *springender Punkt* is knowledge. You were ignorant, but *could* you have known otherwise? Before the absolutely essential point of justice and responsibility, of vengeance and deserved redress (that has exercised modern readers of *Bacchae*[131]), we are confronted first with the problem of the necessary conditions for imputability, that is, of knowledge, its nature and its accessibility. Ought the Thebans to have known better? In the stranger god the problem of knowledge is dramatized

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[129] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113b 21-6: τούτοις δ' ἔοικε μαρτυρεῖσθαι καὶ ἰδίᾳ ὑφ' ἑκάστων καὶ ὑπ' αὐτῶν τῶν νομοθετῶν· κολάζουσι γὰρ καὶ τιμωροῦνται τοὺς δρῶντας μοχθηρά, ὅσοι μὴ βίᾳ ἢ δι' ἄγνοιαν ἧς μὴ αὐτοὶ αἴτιοι, τοὺς δὲ τὰ καλὰ πράττοντας τιμῶσιν, ὡς τοὺς μὲν προτρέψοντες τοὺς δὲ κωλύσοντες.

[130] Blameless, unimpeachable, noble: Hom. *Od.* 1.232, 3.111; with poignant irony of Aegisthus 1.29. A term never used of gods, whose excellence is in no way connected to the non-imputability of negative characteristics, *LSJ s.v.* ἀμύμων.

[131] See e.g. *The Riddle of the Bacchae: the last stage of Euripides' Religious Views*. Norwood, 1880; *Le Problème des Bacchantes*. Nihard, 1912; Mason, 1979.

as the problem of ignorance of and encounters with the unfamiliar, the foreign. How ought we to know, to learn what we don't already know, when the new object of knowledge may require new means of knowing? *Bacchae* sets this riddle and its answer is this complex, ambiguous god, this family who is unfamiliar, *known* only through new, strange modes of knowing.

Dionysus does, of course, punish Thebes for its ignorance. As Aristotle says of the drunk man, whom we punish twice over, "he had the power of not getting drunk and his getting drunk was the cause of his ignorance"[132]. We may indeed say that like Pittacus of Mytilene[133], the Thebans are punished twice by Dionysus: for the drunkenness which causes their crime (their "drunkenness" is their excessive scepticism, their attachment to normal cognitive habits) and for the crime itself, that of not recognizing him and receiving him with due honours and in the right spirit. For Dionysus, the culpability of the Thebans inheres in the flawed manner of their knowing: they are deductive reasoners, incapable of seeing and *introducing* in their midst the wondrous son of Zeus. They fail in integrating the anomalous – whether that be a divine conception or mystery rites that are deeper than merely a pretext for base licentiousness. They fail to accept the strange (which would in reality enrich and vitalize them), because it is unapparent to their habitual ways of seeing the patterning motivations.

The sisters of Semelē deduce causes, knowing only what they think they know *a priori* about the nature of things. They reason that the fateful Theban princess is pregnant in the familiar way: "by some mortal man" νυμφευθεῖσαν ἐκ θνητοῦ τινος[134]. Pentheus thinks he knows what the real intentions are behind the so-called mysteries; for him there is no mystery. Kadmos is cleverer, but perhaps not qualitatively different from them, perhaps at least he knows well enough not to think one ever completely knows all factors, so he bets on an option in which he foresees no great loss. Mortals suffer from a blindness for which they are answerable[135]. All are unseeing except Teiresias, the blind seer, the priest who reads intentions from natural signs. He traces divine agency and presence, using different means of detection, through mantic inspiration and a faith in specially transmitted knowledge[136].

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[132] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1113b 30-3: καὶ γὰρ ἐπ' αὐτῷ τῷ ἀγνοεῖν κολάζουσιν, ἐὰν αἴτιος εἶναι δοκῇ τῆς ἀγνοίας, οἷον τοῖς μεθύουσι διπλᾶ τὰ ἐπιτίμια· ἡ γὰρ ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῷ· κύριος γὰρ τοῦ μὴ μεθυσθῆναι, τοῦτο δ' αἴτιον τῆς ἀγνοίας.

[133] Arist. *Pol.* 1274b.18-23: ἐγένετο δὲ καὶ Πιττακὸς νόμων δημιουργὸς ἀλλ' οὐ πολιτείας· νόμος δ' ἴδιος αὐτοῦ τὸ τοὺς μεθύοντας, ἄν τι πταίσωσι, πλείω ζημίαν ἀποτίνειν τῶν νηφόντων· διὰ γὰρ τὸ πλείους ὑβρίζειν μεθύοντας ἢ νήφοντας οὐ πρὸς τὴν συγγνώμην ἀπέβλεψεν, ὅτι δεῖ μεθύουσιν ἔχειν μᾶλλον, ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ συμφέρον.

[134] 26-31.

[135] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1114a.25-29: ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ ἀσθένειαν καὶ πήρωσιν· οὐθεὶς γὰρ ἂν ὀνειδίσειε τυφλῷ φύσει ἢ ἐκ νόσου ἢ ἐκ πληγῆς, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον ἐλεήσαι· τῷ δ' ἐξ οἰνοφλυγίας ἢ ἄλλης
ἀκολασίας πᾶς ἂν ἐπιτιμήσαι. τῶν δὴ περὶ τὸ σῶμα κακιῶν αἱ ἐφ' ἡμῖν ἐπιτιμῶνται, αἱ δὲ μὴ ἐφ' ἡμῖν οὔ.

[136] 200-3, 298-301, 368-9.

2.2.2 Theban error: *anapherein tēn hamartian*

The errors committed, *hamartēthenta,* at the heart of the action of *Bacchae* are also ones committed both "upon calculation and . . . committed in anger", τὰ κατὰ λογισμὸν ἢ θυμὸν ἁμαρτηθέντα[137]. The daughters of Kadmos have made the disastrous mistake (out of envy, cynicism, culpable ignorance) of ascribing to their sister a mistake, in alleging that it is her own sexual error she has referred to Zeus: ἐς Ζῆν' ἀναφέρειν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν λέχους, 29. The protagonists all realize their mistakes too late, *opse*[138]. Only in his last moments, does Pentheus first see his actions as mistakes[139]. It is too late and his efforts to be recognized – ὥς νιν γνωρίσασα, 1116 – will be in vain. These will be the dreadful consequences of original failures of feeling, mistakes that emanate from the deficiencies of calculation and the destructiveness of anger.

In *Bacchae*, as in Tragedy more broadly, we learn a profound pity for humans (for persons like ourselves). Here we find so remarkably, as Aristotle would write in the 4th Century summing up the difference between *hekousion* and *akousion*, how "the irrational passions seem not less human than reason is", δοκεῖ δὲ οὐχ ἧττον ἀνθρωπικὰ εἶναι τὰ ἄλογα πάθη. Acts born of irrationality, of "anger or appetite" ἀπὸ θυμοῦ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας, also "belong to the man", καὶ αἱ πράξεις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου. It is absurd to treat them as involuntary, ἄτοπον δὴ τὸ τιθέναι ἀκούσια ταῦτα[140]. The orphaned acts of such mixed parentage, whether sent abroad, exposed (*ektetheis*) or abandoned, like Oedipus, Dionysus, Orestes or Cresphontes, are always seen to return eternally to trouble mortals and make them consider who they in fact are, as opposed to merely seem to be, what they mean and how they are living. For the Greeks – poets as much as philosophers – the evaluation of desires, motivations and actions is always seen as entangled in very complex ways with the knowledge or ignorance of circumstances, motivations and actions[141].

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[137] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a 30 - 1111b. 3. Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 56-7.

[138] 1345: ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἤιδετε. See p. 57 n. 57 and p. 114 for translation.

[139]1118-21: Ἐγώ τοι, μῆτερ, εἰμί, παῖς σέθεν/ Πενθεύς, ὃν ἔτεκες ἐν δόμοις Ἐχίονος·/ οἴκτιρε δ' ὦ μῆτέρ με μηδὲ ταῖς ἐμαῖς/ ἁμαρτίαισι παῖδα σὸν κατακτάνηις.

[140] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111a 30 - 1111b. 3: ἔτι δὲ τί διαφέρει τῷ ἀκούσια εἶναι τὰ κατὰ λογισμὸν ἢ θυμὸν ἁμαρτηθέντα; φευκτὰ μὲν γὰρ ἄμφω, δοκεῖ δὲ οὐχ ἧττον ἀνθρωπικὰ εἶναι τὰ ἄλογα πάθη, ὥστε καὶ αἱ πράξεις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου <αἱ> ἀπὸ θυμοῦ καὶ ἐπιθυμίας. ἄτοπον δὴ τὸ τιθέναι ἀκούσια ταῦτα.

[141] So, Jones in his *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*: "Consider *hamartia*. Nearly all professional Aristotelians have felt obliged, in the face of related passages in the *Nicomachaean Ethics* and the *Rhetoric*, to take this word to mean error of judgement, and to exclude any strong implication of moral fault or shortcoming. I believe that they are right, and that the strenuous efforts which were made during the nineteenth century, and occasionally since, to lend moral emphasis to *hamartia* [translated as *peccatum* in the late Mediaeval de Moerbeke, *frailty* by Twining, 1789] must be reckoned unavailing (although it is important to bear in mind that the Greeks *did not distinguish wickedness and stupidity with anything like Christian definiteness*." Jones, 1968: 15. In this light, Vernant's argument that, in Aristotle, desire in fact "reposes" ultimately on *hexis*, the constitution or disposition of the person, which undermines the full imputability or responsibility of actions to persons, seems reminiscent of Christian readings of "error" as sin. Yet, we might follow Augustine perhaps, in replying that

2.2.3 *Kei mē thelei*[142]

In Aristotle, calculation and anger are set against one another like this, but also shown as commensurable, with respect to defining the quality of intentionality. These – τὰ κατὰ λογισμὸν ἢ θυμὸν ἁμαρτηθέντα – figure very strongly and in particular ways in *Bacchae*. Zeus himself and Semelē are the victims of Hera's calculativeness, *dolion*, *mēchanai*. Dionysus is spared by his father's reckoning in advance, from that same jealous, strategizing intelligence of Hera[143]. The daughters of Kadmos (like the daughters of Proteus and those of Minyas[144]), are the victims of their own shallow calculation of things[145]. Kadmos is the victim of his own cleverness, "ingenious schemes", "stratagems", *sophismata*[146], as is the "city-slicker"[147] who persuades the country folk to try ambushing and catching the bacchants. Teiresias himself raises the issue of strategizing when it comes to divine beings, repudiating it in his pious enthusiasm – *ouden sophizomestha* – but significantly he is speaking to the old Phoenician sailor, who is seen by his own family as a man of *sophismata*[148]. Kadmos' calculating nature is made quite evident – calculation versus spontaneous authenticity is a clear thematic priority for the poet.

Teiresias seeks to convert the *tyrannos*. He seems a uniquely discursive kind of true believer, correcting and explaining in a long, eclectically coloured discourse on Dionysus, his gifts,

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Original Sin [a kind of typology for *hexis*, and of 20th C. 'genes'], in its recognition and articulation, can in fact be the very access to a deeper notion of freedom, responsibilty and meaning.

[142] 39-40: δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει, / ἀτέλεστον οὖσαν τῶν ἐμῶν βακχευμάτων.

[143] 290-1: Ἥρα νιν ἤθελ' ἐκβαλεῖν ἀπ' οὐρανοῦ, / Ζεὺς δ' ἀντεμηχανήσαθ' οἷα δὴ θεός·

[144] Proetides: Apollod. 2.26-28, where the language of service, *thereapeia* is particularly redolent of the *Bacchae* of this interpretation. Bacchylides *Epinikoi* 11.43-112. For the daughters of Minyas see Plut. *Q. Gr.* 38 = *Moralia* 299 E 5 – 300 A 4. On these sets of sisters and what they have in common with the daughters of Kadmos and their significance for Boeotian and Argive cult, see Otto, 1933: 109, also his Chp. 15, 155-64 "Dionysos und die Frauen"; and Dodds xxv-vi.

[145] 32-4: τοιγάρ νιν αὐτὰς ἐκ δόμων ὥιστρησ' ἐγὼ/ μανίαις, ὄρος δ' οἰκοῦσι παράκοποι φρενῶν, / σκευήν τ' ἔχειν ἠνάγκασ' ὀργίων ἐμῶν.

[146] Κάδμου σοφίσμαθ', 30. Note that Pentheus later will want the Stranger to pay the penalty for his *sophismata*, 489: δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν. Pentheus' reading of the Stranger exactly matches the reading of Semelē and the reasons for her incendiary death made by her inferring sisters, 26-31.

[147] *Sophismata*: 30, and 489, where Pentheus says the Stranger must pay the penalty for *his* "abject, ingenious schemes". τις πλάνης κατ' ἄστυ καὶ τρίβων λόγων, 717. Dodds on 717: "τρίβων, 'rubbed', i.e. 'experienced' . . . one of the colloquial words introduced into tragedy by Euripides . . . an irreverent ἀγοραῖος ἀνήρ with an eye to the main chance", an unsympathetic type in Euripides the over-bold man, idle with an over-active tongue, cf. *IA* 275, *Or.* 902-3: κἀπὶ τῶιδ' ἀνίσταται/ ἀνὴρ τις ἀθυρόγλωσσος, ἰσχύων θράσει·. Roux ad loc. finds that Euripides is making a political point against the too skilled public speakers at Athens who abuse their audience and lead it into reckless undertakings: "Il censure l'éloquence acquise, cynique et dangereuse du démagogue du Ve siècle, auquel il s'est attaqué volontiers à la fin de sa vie". For the over bold man of the city in *Bacchae* see Teiresias' remarks at 270-1: θράσει δὲ δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ' ἀνὴρ/κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων.

[148] 199-200: Κα. οὐ καταφρονῶ 'γὼ τῶν θεῶν θνητὸς γεγώς. / Τε. οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν.

history and its meaning and interpretation[149]. Yet he also suggests the limitation of explanation, 201-3, and a sense of the weakness and futility of persuasion, ἀλλ' ὅμως χορευτέον, / κοὐ θεομαχήσω σῶν λόγων πειςθεὶς ὕπο, 324-5. Persuasion, on the other hand, is just what the thoroughgoing city-man, Pentheus, had accused the seer of using on Kadmos: σὺ ταῦτ' ἔπειςας, Τειρεσία·, 255. There are many awesome things in the world, *polla ta deina*, but nothing is more *deinon* than human beings and the human mind, in Sophocles' famous hymn[150]. Yet in Dionysus' proximity, the calculating mind is shown either to be very feeble or to become enfeebled by the god. Thus, Pentheus thinks himself capable of much, but it is the god who is truly *deinos*, and the king has not reckoned with this[151].

2.2.4 First Episode: 170-369

Nevertheless, it is not calculativeness for which we shall remember Pentheus, but the quality with which Aristotle contrasts it: *thumos* and *epithumia*[152]. In our first glimpse of him, focalized through Kadmos' perspective, he is already being characterized as full of haste, exertion or eagerness, *spoudē*. How he "flutters", *eptoētai*[153], says the old king of the new,

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[149] 266-327, on the famous *Teiresiasszene* see Deichgräber, 1935; Gallistl, 1979; Roth, 1984. See the memorable remarks of Dodds at Dodds, 91: "What Teiresias does perhaps represent is the ecclesiastical politics of Delphi . . . the type of mind which would harness to the cause of doctrinal conservatism the spontaneous emotional forces generated by a religious revival . . . 'A regulated ecstacy has lost its germ of danger' (Nilsson, *History of Greek Religion*, 208). Tyrrell was not, I think, far from the mark when he compared Teiresias to a Broad Church dean."

[150] Soph. *Ant.* 332-83.

[151] 492, 856, 861, 971.

[152] On Pentheus and the "unity of his characterization", and that from an 'Aristotelian' point of view, see Radke: 203-55; see also Seidensticker, 1972 and Sale, 1972.

[153] 214 ὡς ἐπτόηται: Dodds: "a hint to the producer". Consider the winged words of Homeric exchanges with their clear targets and in contrast the directionlessness of the agitated, flutterers of Tragedy, unmeasured and therefore weightless. See also 304, where we see how fluttering is associated with panic in battle, and νῦν γὰρ πέτηι τε καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς, 332. This is Plato's word for "arousal" of desires, which is set against the *logizesthai* the 'calculation' of the rational faculty. See e.g. Pl. *R.* 439.d. 4-8. τὸ δὲ ᾧ ἐρᾷ τε καὶ πεινῇ καὶ διψῇ καὶ περὶ τὰς ἄλλας ἐπιθυμίας ἐπτόηται ἀλόγιστόν τε καὶ ἐπιθυμητικόν, 6-8. Seaf sees this in terms of the "mystic fluttering of the initiand", see his comments on 214: "on his first appearance P. is characterized by the first of many experiences *reflecting* initiation into the Dionysiac mysteries." For such fluttering as the nervous excitement "characteristic of mystic initiands" Seaford points us to various sources – Classical, Imperial (Plutarch) and late Antique (Aristides Quintilianus). Consider the earlier sources – Ar. *Nub.* 319 and Plato *Phd*. 108 b 1 – in *Clouds*, Strepsiades is "excited in his soul", *psuchē,* (a notion of 'mind' that is *a priori* 'fluttery') for reasons above all to do with the comedy of intellectual misapprehending and the prospect of mastering the art of argument. In *Phaedo*, just as in *Republic* "flutteriness" is associated pejoratively with the soul that desires basely. This negative sense of *ptoein* is I think the operative one in *Bacchae*. The problem lies in how we judge terminology (technical, metaphorical, a loosely permissive deployment of several connotations for effect), and of course our judgement will be determined by a prior choice or judgement, which is what we are here trying as well as possibly to make articulate. We may question also the notion of the Tragic poem as "reflecting" mystery rites. Seaford's midrashic reading wants us to detect hidden meanings, and purposes, but there is an evident, *peshat*, sense of the flutteriness of Pentheus which is incontrovertible: he is an easily aroused and agitated man. Of course, there could be present at once several different connotations of a given term, and that would be characteristic of Euripides. If there is a telestic subtext, it is very much subordinated to the theme of resistance, of the mortal's willfulness,

younger one. We are set in a state of tension, in expectation of what "very strange" or "very new" thing, *neōteron*, a man in such a state has to say, 212-14:

> Πενθεὺς πρὸς οἴκους ὅδε διὰ σπουδῆς περᾶι,
> Ἐχίονος παῖς, ὧι κράτος δίδωμι γῆς.
> ὡς ἐπτόηται· τί ποτ' ἐρεῖ νεώτερον;
>
> Here comes Pentheus hustling home in a hurry
> Echion's son, to whom I have given the control of the land.
> How he flutters, what fresh business will he speak?

Before he has come into the presence of Dionysus, a charismatic and disruptive presence, we find in Pentheus a man of both sceptical, warily sarcastic and emotional disposition, *hexis*. He divines calculation in others, but is not similarly wary or interpretive of his own motivations and meanings. In this way to Pentheus the bacchic rites are specious, so has he inferred (πλασταῖσι βακχείαισιν, 217). Dionysus is a new *daimōn* of unestablished identity (τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα/ Διόνυσον, ὅστις ἔστι 219-20);[154] his rites are pretext, *prophasin* 224. Behind the religious claims[155], a common human motivation can be deduced: hedonistic drunkenness and sexual license[156]. But Pentheus will answer these allegedly hidden motivations, which he believes he has truly discerned, not with a careful or similarly calculating strategy, but with the angry man's violence, 226-32. He hears there is a foreigner that has arrived in Thebes; he must be a charlatan, ξένος, / γόης ἐπωιδὸς Λυδίας ἀπὸ

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an unwillingness that is turned against itself like bait in a trap, *dolos*. The manifest meaning theme is the clarity, *saphes*, that characters in drama are perpetually trying to secure.

[154] A peculiarly resonant charge. Socrates was, of course accused of introducing new gods and corrupting the young, (Pl. *Ap.* 24 b 8 – 24 c 1 ἔχει δέ πως ὧδε· Σωκράτη φησὶν ἀδικεῖν τούς τε νέους διαφθείροντα καὶ θεοὺς οὓς ἡ πόλις νομίζει οὐ νομίζοντα, ἕτερα δὲ δαιμόνια καινά.). So very similarly does Dionysus threaten to ruin the *polis,* "corrupt young women", (ὃς ἡμέρας τε κεὐφρόνας συγγίγνεται/τελετὰς προτείνων εὐίους νεάνισιν, 237-8); and the Stranger is himself a corrupted youth, 453-9 [cf. in Plato, the body of the beloved cherished by the one who values pleasure over the good, is remarkably like the Stranger's body, in the eyes of Pentheus at 453-9, cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 239d.]; and Dionysus is *kainos daimōn*, which sophistic Teiresias and the Socratically slippery Stranger wish to introduce, *eisagein* [see e.g. Di Benedetto's discerning a Socratic elusiveness in the Stranger's replies at 479 similar to that at Pl. *Prot*. 350 c]. On the essential question of new and foreign gods and their introduction at Athens see esp. Parker, 1996: 152-198. On the threat represented for the Ancient Athenians by the new and by change, note especially the case of Nicomachus, which we learn about in a speech of the orator Lysias, Lys. 30 *Kata Nikomachou.* Nicomachus was prosecuted by the Athenians dissatified with his re-organization of the sacrificial calendar, the undesirable 'introduction' of innovations, which as Parker shows is rather more a case of his calendar reflecting practical, real changes rather than activating them. On new gods and political life at Athens extensively see Garland: 1992. On the rejuvenation of Dionysus after about 430 BCE – the Dionysus of Euripides, 405 BCE, is really a "Neo-Dionysus" – see especially Carpenter in *Masks*: 185-206 and Carpenter, 1986: 124-6. See D'Angour, 2011: 157-161, on Dionysus the god the 'neos' god – young, fresh, new – whose birth is so much evoked in *Bacchae.*

[155] Hiding behind the mask of darkness and of spiritual legitimacy ἄλλην δ' ἄλλοσ' εἰς ἐρημίαν/πτώσσουσαν 222-3…ὡς δὴ μαινάδας θυοσκόους. They serve common lust εὐναῖς ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν 223, not divinity.

[156] 221-5, 260-2.

χθονός, 233-4. We may deduce what is in the foreigner, what are his real motives, simply by looking at him; he is attractive and must therefore be someone who exploits attractiveness. So runs the implicit logic of a man vigilant about the desires and motives of others[157]. Such a one has a king's wrathful violence coming to him, he will cut his head from his body[158].

Pentheus is truly a child of his skeptical house. He "knows" that Semelē was struck down by Zeus for lying about her relations with him: *epseusato*[159]. The foreigner is claiming that Dionysus is a god, once stitched into Zeus' thigh. Pentheus is not so credulous as to accept such empty claims. Such "terrible things", *deina*, such outrages, whoever the foreigner is, surely deserve only violent death (strangling)[160]. The now all too manifest wariness and "realism" of Pentheus is further highlighted by the enthusiasm of Kadmos in the company of Teiresias, whom Pentheus then spots. Kadmos is ridiculous, 250; Pentheus chides him for his senselessness, 251-2. He must be ignorant to voluntarily deck himself out as a bacchant. He easily deduces the reason behind what he is seeing: Teiresias has base motivations, he wants to introduce the new god and receive fees for taking auguries from the flights of birds and from reading burnt sacrifices, 255-7:

> σὺ ταῦτ' ἔπεισας, Τειρεσία· τόνδ' αὖ θέλεις
> τὸν δαίμον' ἀνθρώποισιν ἐσφέρων νέον
> σκοπεῖν πτερωτὰ κἀμπύρων μισθοὺς φέρειν.
>
> You, Teiresias, you persuaded him of this, this new
> *Daimōn* do you want to bring to people
> So you can watch birds and make money off burnt-offerings.

Pentheus' divination of motives supposedly penetrates the truth behind Teiresias' divinations: *misthos*, money, the wages of deception. Kadmos has been the victim of persuasion, to which Pentheus himself would never fall prey, he may imagine. Kadmos' will, the mind within him, has been won over by the external will of Teiresias; he fails to see what is in his self-interest. Only out of regard for his old-age does Pentheus not lock up Teiresias. He would otherwise be bound up, *desmios*, captive with the bacchants, for introducing "wicked consummations", "abject rites": τελετὰς πονηρὰς εἰσάγων, 260[161].

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[157] 235-8 and 455-59.

[158] 239-41.

[159] 245.

[160] 246-7: ταῦτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ κἀγχόνης ἔστ' ἄξια,/ ὕβρεις ὑβρίζειν, ὅστις ἔστιν ὁ ξένος;

[161] Bacchic acts are *a priori* artificial – bearing the traces of ordinary intelligible intentions – πλασταῖσι βακχείαισιν, 218 and *a priori* "wicked, worthless, base" *ponēra*.

There is nothing healthy left in *orgia*, when wine flows in women's feasts, 260-2 [162]. Women, foreigners, seers – Pentheus can see through them, *he* knows what they are like. *He* detects the actual quality of agency behind acts, and there is ever strategy. Pentheus alone understands the real import of their situation.

Pentheus is himself, so he shows, unsusceptible to the persuasion by which his grandfather has become so undignified and docile, 266-342. He is an angry man becoming violently outraged. He will not himself bear touching, since others represent a danger of infection, a threat to his self-mastery, such as has evidently been the effect on Kadmos, 343-44. He will teach a lesson for this mindlessness, 345. He will have the seer's seat of prophecy violently destroyed, turned upside down by the men who are the agents of the king's will, 346-51. His language escalates again, finding a new pitch of violence. The foreigner must be tracked down, sniffed out[163], he who brings a "new disease" and "outrages" the beds of women, 353-4. The disease of the new is always a threat to the community, the very *raison d'être* for which is self-preservation. That imperative to endure is expressed in the conservatism of enduring societies and explains why a figure like Dionysus is so fascinating and so dangerous[164]. If the god is taken he must be tied up and brought in as one fit to die by stoning, 355-7.

2.2.5 Second Episode: 435-518

In the second episode, 435-518, Penetheus and Dionysus come face-to-face. A servant brings in the god, the apprehended Stranger. This is where Dionysus has been described, as we have seen, as "not unwilling", and "amenable", *eutrepes* 440[165], and where the servant records

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[162] We translate *orgia* as rites, or mysteries, but note opportunity it presents to the poet for playing with etymologies and complementary meanings, and Euripides is a poet who plays in such a way continually. ὀργάω denotes ripening, swelling, bursting; sexual arousal; but most generally, to be in an emotional state that we are coming to recognize as the natural condition of Pentheus himself, so *LSJ* gives: "to be eager or ready, to be excited . . . the influence of passion, . . . of a thing, to be urgent." Further on *orgia* and paronomasia with *orgadas* cf. Chantraine s.v. and Rijksbaron oon ἐν ὀργάσιν, 340. There is a similar interplay of *thumos* & *thuein*, e.g. 794.

[163] Track down, *ichneuein*: Typically, the same idea is used by one figure in one sense and then in a reversed sense by another later so Pentheus at 352, but Dionysus warns him at 817: ἀλλ' ἐξιχνεύσουσίν σε, κἂν ἔλθηις λάθραι. Mortals like Oedipus and Pentheus, track down the truth, hunt it out, following its spoor, they follow the successive steps of a logic of which they think themselves masters. They are the doctors who face the symptoms of an epidemic and set about to cure it, 352-4: οἱ δ' ἀνὰ πόλιν στείχοντες ἐξιχνεύσατε/ τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον/ καινὴν γυναιξὶ καὶ λέχη λυμαίνεται. Cf. Soph. *OT* 220-1, 475-6.

[164] On culture and its rites as functioning for the perpetual integration of the young and old, successors and predecessors, "Vitality and Transcendence", see Bloch, 1992.

[165] εὐτρεπὲς 440: Note that the manuscripts here as at 860, read *eupre-* rather than *eutrepes*. Most modern interpreters follow Elmsley's acceptance of Canter's *eutrepes*, ("Ita noster *Iph. T.* 244, *Herc.* . . . *eutrepes poiēsomai.* Nostri, *I will make ready*." Elmsley ad loc.) at both 440 and 844. Diggle, Dodds, Roux, Guidorizzi, Di Benedetto all accept this emendation. Yet there are those who wish to retain the manuscript reading, Kopff keeps *euprepes* at 440 but adopts *eutrepes* at 844. Rijksbaron, for whom it all turns on a misreading of the middle

his own explanation to the Stranger of *his* unwillingness, in taking him captive[166]. From the independent and autoptic point of view of the servant, Dionysus is described as an animal, the prey that has been hunted down[167], like a creature, that is, of diminished intentionality, ordinarily the passive object of human intent and purpose. Yet unlike the wild and pure animal that is hunted down by men who penetrate the unworked fields and forests, this captive does not react as expected, and there is more to it than the willingness or unwillingness of the beast. He is after all an apparently human prey, he can be addressed, appealed to and can respond. He has been a gentle beast *thēr praos*: ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' ἡμῖν πρᾶος, 436. He is remarkable for his equanimity (and later, his equivocation much of a human and of a god). This is not an object: he is a subject, his face expresses a state of mind, a response anticipated[168]. He is even easily commanding in letting himself be commanded, 438-40:

> οὐκ ὠχρός, οὐδ' ἤλλαξεν οἰνωπὸν γένυν,
> γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κἀπάγειν ἐφίετο
> ἔμενέ τε, τοὐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος.

> He did not pale, nor did his wine-blushing cheek change,
> But he was laughing and he told us to tie him up and lead him away
> And he waited, making himself amenable.

Dionysus is taken, but by some mysterious transaction, his captive devotees elsewhere are simultaneously set free, 443-48. An invisible hand is at work, an extraordinary agency, not to be explained by the normal laws that govern mortal life[169], "this man here is full of wonders" 449-50.

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form, ποιούμενος, wants us to retain *euprepes* on the basis of Tyrell's gloss " 'turning for himself my task to seemliness' i.e. the Stranger acted in his own interest by making my task a dignified (or: easy) one'". "Readiness", "amenability" is far more in keeping with the Dionysus of the *Bacchae* whose 'seemliness' or 'decency', is not something necessarily immediately apparent. He wants 'readiness' and re-orientation towards himself in the right manner of hospitability and complicates what mortals thought was "seemly", *euprepes*. See on amenability and the theme of service, *therapeia* on service to the god and "amenability" *eutrepes*, see see § 3.2.2 p. 145 n. 40; Wildberg, 1999/2000.

[166] ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' ἡμῖν πρᾶος οὐδ' ὑπέσπασεν/φυγῆι πόδ', ἀλλ' ἔδωκεν οὐκ ἄκων χέρας 436-7, τοὐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος 440, κἀγὼ δι' αἰδοῦς εἶπον· Ὦ ξέν', οὐχ ἑκὼν/ ἄγω σε, Πενθέως δ' ὅς μ' ἔπεμψ' ἐπιστολαῖς. 441-2.

[167] τήνδ' ἄγραν ἠγρευκότες 434, ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' 436.

[168] Face: we refer to Dionysus' face, as we can to social others always. We infer abstract, emotional and constitutional knowledge about him from his visage. This is the mark of the human social agent, a constant interpreter of its own sensations and perceptions and of the states and likely intentions of others. See Gell on abduction § 5.2.4; on Foley and the interpretation of masks and dramatic inwardness § 6.3.2; and Vernant on *facialité* § 6.4.

[169] αὐτόματα δ' αὐταῖς δεσμὰ διελύθη ποδῶν/ κλῆιδές τ' ἀνῆκαν θύρετρ' ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός. 447-8.

The normal order of human intention and effect submits to the impenetrable purposes and powers of a non-human order, which reveals itself in prodigies, *thaumata*[170]. Intentions, expectations (*elpides*, thoughts, anticipations), objectives and their means are not operative in the accustomed way here: this is an extraordinary situation. The servant closes his report with a haunting and very significant comment, σοὶ δὲ τἄλλα χρὴ μέλειν, "the rest must be your concern, *melein*", 450. We are leaving the context of actions with aims, *telē*, intentions; and we shall learn the meaning of attention: attending to the quality of our means or modes: *melein*[171].

Pentheus acts like a self-possessed man. True bearing or comportment is not, however, the same thing as acting or role-playing, not at least in Dionysus' Thebes. Pentheus plays the role of the master of the situation, the master of others and of himself, but by now we expect of him the intemperateness of the man who is not entirely self-mastering. We have seen a young man, like others in Euripides, not distinguished for his emotional continence[172]. He is a king of easy anger, *thumos*, and when we discover later that he is also one of overpowering appetite, *epithumia*, we shall not be surprised. It is his self-confident autonomy here that is more "put on", like a public face. His diplomatic and condescending mastery is really what is specious, as he has called the wild, exuberant *akrasia*, "unmastery", of the bacchants.

Dionysus can be released; he is in Pentheus' power now. There is no danger, the king assures all, 451-2. The Stranger is the object of the king's patronizing inspection. It is an admixture of mockery at the inferred sexual designs of Dionysus and the possible arousal of the king's own erotic interest, of which he must be unconscious, 453-9[173]. If he has such feelings they are 'involuntary' and unrecognized. He is a man who does not choose what arouses him any more than a magnet chooses the attraction it "feels". Unlike electro-magnetism, however, humans can become aware of their feelings and define them rather than be defined by them. In the presence of Dionysus' magnetic person, Pentheus will seem

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[170] There are abundant prodigies and general recognition of the miraculousness, the more-than-human agency evidently behind them, so also e.g. the servant who brings in the god captive recognizes the super-natural is at work ἄνευ θνητῆς χερός 447-8; and the messenger who reports the events of the dreadful climax describes "doings not mortal" ἔργματ' οὐχὶ θνητὰ δρῶν 1069.

[171] Similarly ominous is the chorus' singing in the second stasimon that Dionysus "will be a matter of concern to you" in the future, 534-6: ἔτι ναὶ τὰν βοτρυώδη/Διονύσου χάριν οἴνας/ ἔτι σοι τοῦ Βρομίου μελήσει.

[172] Other than Pentheus, young men in Euripides are seen in psychological beakdown: Orestes is a being penetrated by the external forces of madness, longing only to become sealed up in a dreamless sleep; Actaeon is an injudicious boaster, physically broken into pieces; also Jason, of whom it can be said that he had not the capacity to contain his ambition and his desires. By contrast, Hippolytus, Ion and the Hippolytus of *Hippolutos Kaluptomenos* are marked by their excessive continence, the others are too much hunters, these too much fleeing, see for example of Hippolytus Nauck[2] *TGF* Eur. fr. 428 οἱ γὰρ Κύπριν φεύγοντες ἀνθρώπων ἄγαν/ νοσοῦσ' ὁμοίως τοῖς ἄγαν θηρωμένοις. See "Hippolytus and the Bacchae" Bellinger 1939.

[173] The interest in Dionysus/ the Stranger's visage is sustained throughout these remarks. For a description in Plato of the body of the beloved cherished by the one who values pleasure over the good, which sounds remarkably like Pentheus' remarks concerning the Stranger's looks at 453-9, cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 239d.

a man stunted in his capacity to reflect, see himself anew and thereby become a changed, a matured and different person, one responsive and note merely reactive. He is not a man who can perceive what is wondrous, strange or new. There is no wonder here. To him Dionysus is "full of desire", πόθου πλέως 456, not of the "miracles" which the servant has seen, 449.

In their first interaction we may fruitfully focus on the slipperiness of words and meanings. There is a disengagement or slippage between referents here, which presents another facet of the disjuncture between idea and reality, between human purpose and outcomes. A divergence between "meaning" as intention or object of will ("to mean to do"), and "meaning" as signification ("No means no!"), is patent here and further illuminates the thematic status of intentionality and unwillingness in the play. Is language something that *happens* – *paschein* – in or through a person, (like laughter, something that is shaped by cultural peculiarities that over time becomes a reflex)? Or is it something a person controls and does, a figuring of their effective intent – *drān*? Is it, as voluntary and involuntary so often are, "mixed" *miktai*? The subject's relation to language is corollary of its relation "to self" and to volition. This relation is determining for the constitution and shape of identity[174].

Pentheus has made up his mind about the impassive Stranger before that attractive figure has been allowed a word. When finally he does address him directly, it is to establish his identity in the customary way: "Tell me firstly, who are you [in terms of] what is your family [kind]?" Although he goes on as if in a regular conversation between two men, it seems significant that Dionysus' first words (and this is the case whether we read *oknos* or *kompos*[175]) should be about words and the manner of their utterance. Pentheus asks investigatively about the Stranger's origins and then about the origins of the *teletai* – rites, consummations or initiations – he brings, 465-86. Pentheus hears only what he is already equipped to hear; he asks Dionysus if there is "some Zeus who gives birth to new gods[176]" and ignores Dionysus' reply, which effectively declares Dionysus a local Theban, whether god or man[177].

Pentheus is inquiring after the form of Dionysus' *orgia*, but these are outside of the ordinary systems of meaning, beyond normal language, and beyond the untransformed, uninitiated

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[174] On language and agency see Chp. 3's Taylorian reading of *Bacchae*, and Taylor, 1985, 2016.

[175] πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι λέξον ὅστις εἶ γένος; 460. See Dodds on 461: *Oknos:* The answer to this question, in the manuscripts is *ou kompos oudeis*: "There is no boasting" and others emend this to *ouk oknos oudeis*: "[There is i.e. I have] no hesitation". See the extensive note above at § 2.2.1.1 n. 59. Cf. also 506-7, where Pentheus, the boasting cousin of the luckless boaster Actaeon, is too unhesitating, in identifying himself, nothing gives him pause.

[176] Like the "some mortal" 28, who purportedly got Semelē pregnant, or the *daimōn* Dionysus, "whoever he is"220 and 233, 247.

[177] 467-8: Pe. Ζεὺς δ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖ τις ὃς νέους τίκτει θεούς; / Di. οὔκ, ἀλλ' ὁ Σεμέλην ἐνθάδε ζεύξας γάμοις.

intentions of normal day-to-day interactions[178]: ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν, 472. These *orgia* are beyond the kind of face-to-face modes of communication and communing – ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα, καὶ δίδωσιν ὄργια, 470 – which Pentheus, the city man, presupposes he is now engaged in[179]. That would be the transactional mode in which actors can plausibly presume to know each others' intentions, the mode in which actors exchange information in working towards mutually intelligible, even if undisclosed, goals. There, actions have ends, they are done with comprehensible objectives; "what is the use or profit", *onēsis*, of those ineffable *orgia* to the "sacrificers", Pentheus wants to know[180]. Here inscrutable and indescribable *teletai* and *orgia* are displacing the *telē* and *erga* of the *durée* of ordinary life and its interactions. Language becomes ever more slippery, a frustrator of human will and intention, rather than merely its vehicle or instrument. The desire for knowledge becomes a lure, *dolos*[181], which is to say the simulacrum of a desirable object, which is really the vehicle for the perilous intentions of an agency outside of and foreign to the victim's own, 474-5:

> Di. οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ', ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναι.
> Pe. εὖ τοῦτ' ἐκιβδήλευσας, ἵν' ἀκοῦσαι θέλω.
>
> Di. It is not permitted for you to hear, though worth knowing.
> Pe. You trick that out well, so that I should wish to hear.

Pentheus thinks Dionysus' design is simply to make him want what is not worth wanting. Here he is again hitting on a truth about his situation, for desire, being ambushed by one's own appetites and own ignorance, is just what will happen. In spite of this recognition, the king will gradually continue to lose what little force of will may be said to be his. He will be drawn on and made to desire impossible things[182].

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[178] Nightly rites are (with different readings for the reason why, according to the different perspective of the speaker) set against the world of day, so 485-8. The dark is sacred for Dionysus 486, it is dangerous where women are concerned to Pentheus 487, but day or night, it makes no difference to those intent on base objectives, retorts the undercover deity, 488.

[179] *Orgia* as 'things': on 470 Seaford mentions the Hellenistic inscription at Miletos that includes details about Theban maenads that will bring their Dionysiac expertise to the Milesians "Both there and here ὄργια might mean mystic objects, as in a Hellenistic epitaph from Miletos . . ., apparently at Theocr. 26.13, and conceivably at Aesch. fr. 57. But more likely it means the rituals, as it does generally in *Bacchae*.", Seaford ad loc. and see also Henrichs, 1969, 1978; Porres Caballero in Bernabé: 159-84.

[180] 473: ἔχει δ' ὄνησιν τοῖσι θύουσιν τίνα;

[181] On *dolos*, "bait, lure, trick", a very model of the dissemblance of motive, see § 4.2.2

[182] 997-1007, where the chorus sings of that which cannot be won by force, that which is pursued by the insane. That is contrasted with the great, plain, (obvious, manifest [*phanera*]) things that are worth pursuing; those alone lead to a long and happy existence. And see the echoing words of frenzied Agauē to the bacchant chorus, where she is holding the only too *phenron* head of her son, which she cannot discern as such, 1197-9: γέγηθα, / μεγάλα μεγάλα καὶ φανερὰ τᾶιδ' ἄγραι/ κατειργασμένα.

The rituals are specious, they are pretexts for base motives covered up. The Stranger's replies are "counterfeited", *ekibdēleusas*[183]. They are designed for effect and conceal the motivating desire, which is to lure the king with the promise of a depth or mystery that Pentheus believes is simply non-existent. The unspeakable, unspeaking *orgia* have the agency, or at least the emotional reaction, of a person, responds Dionysus, "The *orgia* of the gods hate the man who practises *asebeia*[184]": ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ' ὄργι' ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ, 476.

What is the god like? It is a matter of whatever he wishes, 477-8. Pentheus wants the clear information of first-hand knowledge – ὁρᾶν γὰρ φὴις σαφῶς – but Dionysus' replies frustrate this appetite for clarity and offer only unreadable references to Dionysus' opaque will. Obscurity and miscommunication – here *talk* is a problem, "You fend again this question, quite well saying nothing (or talking nonsense)": τοῦτ' αὖ παρωχέτευσας, εὖ γ' οὐδὲν λέγων, 479. "Leading in" or "introducing" new gods and practices, becomes mixed up with deliberate misleading, or 'leading on', of interlocutors. The failure to understand talk quickly becomes transposed onto the problem of understanding and intelligence *per se*, 480-81[185]:

> Di. δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν.
> Pe. ἦλθες δὲ πρῶτα δεῦρ' ἄγων τὸν δαίμονα;

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[183] *Ekibdēleusas*: *kibdēleuein* "adulterate", "falsify" as *kibdēlos* "adulterated", "fraudulent", especially of gold, so "counterfeit", as at Eur. *Med.* 516. Metaphors of money are particularly important in Tragedy, for money is a symbolic system and therefore systematization of relations and values, and values and relations are what Tragedy is above all concerned with, especially the dangers inherent in their falsifiability or breakdown. Cf. *Basanos*, "touchstone", in Sophocles and *basanizein* "test the worth by rubbing on a touchstone", prominent in Aristophanes. *Nothos,* (though this term does not appear in *Bacchae* the conflation of bastardy with counterfeiture certainly does, both from Pentheus' point of view, and it should be said, in fact, for Dionysus who is saved from Hera's 'undying hybris' by a counterfeit version of himself after he is born, 284-97, that at any rate is what mortals say, 295-7) is what Dionysus is: "bastard", 'half citizen half alien', a cross-breed, this word also denotes what Pentheus takes him for: "spurious", "counterfeit", cf. *Hipp.* 309, 962, 1083; *Andromache* 224, 636, 928; and, a work with many similarities to *Bacchae*, *Ion* 545, 1105, 1473. *Onēsis*: "benefit" – the *archē* or primary motivator for actions, from Pentheus' perspective. Dionysus' incapacitates and disables functions, he makes technology, the prosthetics of human purposiveness, invalid. This is closely related to the theme of value, the underlying confrontation of effect and affect in the play. Pentheus reads others as venal 257, he over-estimates money, *misthos*, as a motivation and in so doing reveals his own volitional psychology, the structure of his willing. So does he think he can buy his way into knowledge of the bacchants: μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δοὺς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν. 812.

[184] *Asebeia*: "impiety", "godlessness", one who feels no *sebas* the "due sense of awe" before that which is sacred or solemn, *to semnon*, see on *sebein* § 3.1 p. 137 n. 10. And on *asebeia* § 2.2.5 p. 86 n. 184.

[185] Cf. Eur. *Med.* 298-301. Dodds on 480: "The stranger ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων in saying that Dion. appeared *hopoios ēthele*: it was a hint of the god's penchant for disguise, whose significance Pentheus missed.". Roux presupposes Dionysiac knowledge to be, in a very restrected sense, knolwedge of rites and Pentheus' ignorance here just the ignorance of the uninitiated, ad loc.: "ἀμαθής 'celui qui n'est pas instruit des rites sacrés', 'le non-initié' (cf. 472 ἀβακχεύτοισιν). C'est dans ce vers le mot important: 'Tu es profane, tu ne peux donc comprendre que le dieu prend la forme qu'il veut'.", Seaford's reading of a telestic pattern is more subtle than this, cf. his remarks on Pentheus' apparent familiarity with certain ritual knowledge, see Seaford on 469.

> Di. To an ignorant man, one will seem to speak no good sense when speaking wisely.
> Pe. Is this the first place you have come with the *daimōn*?

The foreignness of Dionysus' knowledge is evidenced in its being possessed by that predictably shallow class of persons called foreigners, 481-4[186]. Foreigners are unusually opaque persons, not entirely intelligible. They seem either empty or shallow or dangerously dark, like the night concealing powers and meanings not easily predicted. For Pentheus, the meaning of darkness lies in its function to conceal; for Dionysus, through his rites, it lies in its power to reveal in a special way[187], 485-8. Daylight and language – these are self-evident to Pentheus. Perhaps, they are not as self-evident as he imagines: the daylit world is shot with shadows and language is adumbrated by ambiguity. It is not only darkness that can form the scene for shameful deeds, says Dionysus, 486. Now he is beginninng to vex the king with his too clever answers, *sophismatōn kakōn*, 489. Pentheus' frustration is underscored by his switch from second-person address to a third-person utterance which carries more meaning than he himself understands: "How bold is the bacchos and not unskilled [*agumnastos*, i.e. 'trained in the gymnasium'] in speaking" ὡς θρασὺς ὁ βάκχος κοὐκ ἀγύμναστος λόγων, 491. For this is not simply the representative, a symbol or vicar of the god, going metonymously as *bacchos*, but also the very authentic, original Bacchos, *autos*. In this way, Pentheus will become more and more like the man in Aristotle who says things in spite of himself. Here he spurts out – *ekpesein* – truth not knowing what he is saying[188].

And yet, Pentheus still understands himself to be the agent of an unchallenged authority and Dionysus goes along with this, feigning the submission of his own agency to that of the violent king 493-7, who is willful but gradually deprived of meaningful *willingness*: "Say what I must suffer, what dreadful thing are you going to do to me?", εἴφ' ὅτι παθεῖν δεῖ· τί με τὸ δεινὸν ἐργάσηι; 492, the god asks in calm self-assurance[189]. We should find it of no small significance that the first thing that Pentheus threatens is to cut off the Stranger's

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[186] 483-4: Pe. φρονοῦσι γὰρ κάκιον Ἑλλήνων πολύ./ Di. τάδ' εὖ γε μᾶλλον· οἱ νόμοι δὲ διάφοροι. Pentheus, who thinks he has the measure of existence and of other men, simply assumes that Greeks are superior. Dionysus' reply, οἱ νόμοι δὲ διάφοροι, is an example of a beauty of Greek poetry, present since Homer (and in history writing), which went unperceived to a scholar like Edward Saïd, see § 4.4 n. 192. Even if one did accept the older readings of the play (Norwood, 1908; Verrall, 1895, Winnington-Ingram, 1948, see § 3.2.2 n. 67) that sometimes saw in Pentheus a sympathetic victim and in Dionysus a vicious, "Asiatic", un-Greek god, such a statement as 484 of the sense of the relativity of perspectives and usages can scarcely be meant like an indictment of the speaker. See § 2.2.2.1 n. 76 on Hdt. 1.60.3; 3.38.

[187] Fire and light: the drama of night by fire, the strong association of fire with Dionysus, see § 5.3.

[188] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a. 8-11 ὃ δὲ πράττει ἀγνοήσειεν ἄν τις, οἷον †λέγοντές φασιν ἐκπεσεῖν αὐτούς,† ἢ οὐκ εἰδέναι ὅτι ἀπόρρητα ἦν, ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος τὰ μυστικά, ἢ δεῖξαι βουλόμενος ἀφεῖναι, ὡς ὁ τὸν καταπέλτην.

[189] Note how this τί με τὸ δεινὸν ἐργάσηι; 492, gains and adds a more deeply sarcastic colouring from 856 and 861; this is made as obvious as can be in some of the final lines to Pentheus, before he is led off to his death, 971-2: δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κἀπὶ δείν' ἔρχηι πάθη, / ὥστ' οὐρανῶι στηρίζον εὐρήσεις κλέος.

hair[190]. Hair is invested with meaning in Greek poetry. Its simultaneously liquid, flowing quality and textile, vegetable character lend it a special, vital potency in the vicinity of Dionysus, a god strongly associated with the tossed heads of torches and the sap in plants, who is called by Plutarch *dendritēs*[191]. Here the Stranger says that he "grows it for the god", 493-4:

> Pe. πρῶτον μὲν ἁβρὸν βόστρυχον τεμῶ σέθεν.
> Di. ἱερὸς ὁ πλόκαμος· τῶι θεῶι δ' αὐτὸν τρέφω.
>
> Pe. First I am going to cut off those pretty curls of yours.
> Di. To god belongs the hair, I keep it for the god.

"Grow" is really "cause to grow, let grow"[192]. Hair, like the fruits of agriculture, cannot be *made* to grow, only "let" grow, "fostered", in a certain way. Like the *daimōn* of Socrates, which never induced but only checked actions[193], the deliberating mind, will recognize the impulses, see and articulate them as alternatives and hold back, *kolazein*, and accordingly edit itself, *lazesthai*. Those impulses are like hair, arising *sua sponte*, as if by *physis*, by nature's "springing out". From this perspective, the management or arrangement, *organōn*, of the person is a grooming, a cutting back of the spontaneously arising desires, a *styling*, as it were, of inclinations. In the same way Aristotle and Theophrastus associate the unchecked exuberance, hypertrophy or superabundance of vegetable life (which has such a rich place in the imagery of *Bacchae*) with *hybris*[194].

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[190] See § 5.4.

[191] *Dendritēs*: epithet of Dionysus at Plut. 2.675. On Dionysus' "Feuchte" see Otto, 1933: 145-55.

[192] *Trephein* has a concrete sense "thicken, congeal, increase", then "rear, keep, maintain, breed, foster" and in poetry "have within oneself, contain, keep, cherish". It is not distant from that of *orgān* "to swell, ripen", from which "be eager, be excited", *orgainein* "be angry". Euripides plays on the difference between things that *happen*, implicit in *orgān* and things that are *done* in *orgia*, which is derived from *erdein*, *rezein*, *erga*. On many levels he articulates the difference between *dran*, the intentional and purposive, and *pathein*, the occurring, that which is not strongly intended, cf. e.g. ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται 801. Cf. on hair as natural growth, § 5.4. For a genealogy of different modes of Greek action – *prattein*, *poiein*, *drān* – that can purportedly be connected to the epic, lyric and dramatic modes, see Snell, 1928.

[193] Pl. *Ap*. 31 c-d. See also Pl. *Resp.* IV, esp. 439c – 442a, on the faculties of reason, appetite and emotion – *logistikon, epithumētikon, thumos* [*thumoeides*, 456a cf. *orgilos*, 411c] – the curbing [*to kōluon*, the checking of the urge or command of impulse, *to keleuon* 439c] effect of reason and their necessary harmonization, 442a. Knowledge has particular objects, as passions or appetites are similarly *intentional*: having certain objects. 438c-d. The object of *to logistikon*, the rational faculty, can be itself and the other parts that make up the whole of the person, it has a unique capacity of reflexivity.

[194] Arist. *De Gen. Anim*. 725b 35 and Theophrastus *Historia plantarum* 2.7.6 and *De causis plantarum* 2.16.8, 3.1.5, 3.6.8, 3.15.4. See Michelini, 1978: 38-9: "Plutarch (*Moral*. 280 F) uses the word (ὕβρις) in a discussion of animal misbehavior: ἢ διὰ κόρον καὶ πλησμονὴν ἐξυβρίζουσι καὶ βόες καὶ ἵπποι καὶ ὄνοι καὶ ἄνθρωποι; . . . Thus ἐξυβρίζειν in animals, humans and plants stems from superabundance of nurture. It may be termed either misbehaviour or disease, or 'madness', that is, misbehaviour as disease . . . The ὑβρίζων organism- whether human, animal, or vegetable- puts self-aggrandizement before the social role assigned to it. Further on hair, see § 5.4 below. On the

Odysseus, the model of a self-possessed man, knows how to "trim", *lazesthai,* his words and check himself: πάλιν δ' ὅ γε λάζετο μῦθον [195]. Pentheus is the model of a man whose feelings simply *happen*[196]. They are as if external to himself, *sprouting* like hair or the unchecked words of children and drunks. He knows only how to "seize", *lazesthai*, others: "Seize him, he looks down on me and on Thebes, this man", he commands in frustration[197]. Pentheus is a man for seizing, tying up, chopping off. Hair can be styled or given form, subjected, that is, to *intentional* action but it cannot be made to grow or stop growing. It is perfectly coherent that this strange plant-like substance that springs, *phuein* (whence *physis*), from human flesh, should "belong to the god". In his theatre human hybris, the failure to check what arises or springs up inside persons in the shape of impulse and desire, becomes manifest and the unbound hair of masked citizens flies upward into the *aithēr*[198].

The god himself will release the Stranger he says, 498. Pentheus thinks he knows what this means: it is that the god "feels" present during the rites in which he is conjured, 499[199]. For Pentheus, the motivations of others are a matter of the "feel" of situations; he consistently parses others as being how in fact he is, a man of terminal, unarticulated desirousness. Dionysus' presence is not just a matter of the hysteria of crowds, or the rhetoric of rituals, it is a "thick" presence, even now the god is at hand, 500-02:

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cognitive hypertrophy by which we see humans compulsively playing and engaging in symbolic activity, even in their sleep, see the remarks at Lawson & McCauley, 1990: 184.

[195] Hom. *Od.* 4.357, 13.254. And indeed Odysseus is Plato's example for the man so distinct from animals and infants, (like Socrates himself, although Socrates in *Symposium* is also, unlike other historical men, incomparable ref.), whose parts are in discursive contact with one another, the man inside whom there is a dialogue, his self a model of the community of social others, which is the banquet and the *polis*, so at Pl. *R.* 441b. 2-c.2, we read Socrates quoting Homer *Od.*20.17 [for the second time, see also Pl. *R.* 3.390d5]: Ναὶ μὰ Δί', ἦν δ' ἐγώ, καλῶς γε εἶπες. ἔτι δὲ ἐν τοῖς θηρίοις ἄν τις ἴδοι ὃ λέγεις, ὅτι οὕτως ἔχει. πρὸς δὲ τούτοις καὶ ὃ ἄνω που [ἐκεῖ] εἴπομεν, τὸ τοῦ Ὁμήρου μαρτυρήσει, τὸ – στῆθος δὲ πλήξας κραδίην ἠνίπαπε μύθῳ· –
ἐνταῦθα γὰρ δὴ σαφῶς ὡς ἕτερον ἑτέρῳ ἐπιπλῆττον πεποίηκεν Ὅμηρος τὸ ἀναλογισάμενον περὶ τοῦ βελτίονός τε καὶ χείρονος τῷ ἀλογίστως θυμουμένῳ. On the Odysseus of the internal dialogue, the soliloquy, see also Snell, 1928: 23-4 and cf. Gould, 1978: esp. 44-8, on soliloquies in Shakespeare and the framing of dramatic personality. The "neo-Odysseus" of the classical period, to match the "neo Dionysus" of Euripides' late 5th C. version of the resistance of Pentheus, would be, like the Ithacan, that other master of self-containment, of the editing of self and of one's talk, Socrates.

[196] See the distinction between actions and happenings, see § 4.3.2.

[197] Hom. *Od.* 4.357, 13.254. *Bacchae* 503: λάζυσθε· καταφρονεῖ με καὶ Θήβας ὅδε.

[198] 149-50: ἀναπάλλων / τρυφερόν <τε> πλόκαμον εἰς αἰθέρα ῥίπτων. With regard to being "unchecked", we might then wish to read a certain double-meaning, a layer of irony within the designation by Teiresias of Pentheus as *schetlios*, 358-9: ὦ σχέτλι', ὡς οὐκ οἶσθα ποῦ ποτ' εἶ λόγων·/ μέμηνας ἤδη, καὶ πρὶν ἐξεστὼς φρενῶν. He is "unflinching" in his ignorance, it makes him ruthless. Ruthlessness becomes unrestraint. *Ascheton*, 'uncontainable', 'unchecked' and 'not to be checked'. It is interesting to note that *ascheton* a corollary of *epieikton* 'unyielding' occurs in *Iliad* as an attribute of Hera's 'unbending' power *menos*, *Il.* 5. 892 but on the two other occasions of its use of the Trojans' sorrow, *penthos*, 16. 548-9: Τρῶας δὲ κατὰ κρῆθεν λάβε πένθος/ ἄσχετον, οὐκ ἐπιεικτόν and 24. 708: πάντας γὰρ ἀάσχετον ἵκετο πένθος. *Penthos*, the condition is like *Pentheus* the man – unchecked.

[199] 499: Pe. ὅταν γε καλέσηις αὐτὸν ἐν βάκχαις σταθείς.

Di. καὶ νῦν ἃ πάσχω πλησίον παρὼν ὁρᾶι.
Pe. καὶ ποῦ 'στιν; οὐ γὰρ φανερὸς ὄμμασίν γ' ἐμοῖς.
Di. παρ' ἐμοί· σὺ δ' ἀσεβὴς αὐτὸς ὢν οὐκ εἰσορᾶις.

Di. Even now, he is present close by seeing what I am suffering.
Pe. Where is he then? For in my eyes he is not visible.
Di. Here by me, since you yourself are impious, you don't behold.[200]

Yet again we see the underscoring of Pentheus' ignorance and this thematization of personhood and its location, through the dramatization of its very dissimulation. We become sensitive to the evanescent character of person, through the dialectic of presence and absence. Inadvertently, again, Pentheus hits on the dramatic-ironic truth of his situation: Dionysus is not evident *to his eyes*. Legitimacy, for Dionysus, reposes on a certain quality of knowing, of recognition. For Pentheus the possession of power is its own authority and justification, and this is what he counter-offers against the suggestion of his ignorance, 504-5:

Di. αὐδῶ με μὴ δεῖν, σωφρονῶν οὐ σώφροσιν.
Pe. ἐγὼ δὲ δεῖν γε, κυριώτερος σέθεν.

Di. Don't dare bind me, I am a sane man, you insane.
Pe. I will bind you, I am more powerful than you.

Indisposed to feel the emotion of awe, σὺ δ' ἀσεβὴς αὐτὸς ὢν, a kind of healthy aporia, Pentheus cannot understand, οὐκ εἰσορᾶις, 502. There is a quality of knowing, which is also a quality of bearing and relating, which requires a special wholesomeness or 'integrity of mind' *sōphronōn*. Lacking this emotional and epistemic capacity, which here means choosing not to learn to value this capacity, is Pentheus' error, *hamartia*. He is unequipped, he has not

[200] παρ' ἐμοί 502: Dodds wants us to translate, with Murray, "Where I am". "The irony vanishes if we translate 'Beside me'". I do not entirely concur. The theme of presence and absence is intersected by the diagonal axis of the theme, unity and multiplicity of self. Dionysus is both identical with the Stranger and also a kind of projection of the Stranger; we see them alternately as two and as one, they are as if both inside *and* external to one another in a complicated dance of perspective, which amongst other things becomes a dynamic model revealing the complex (infoliate) nature of personhood, a quality both virtual and objective. Dodds further: "Vision demands not only an objective condition – the god's presence – but a subjective one – the percipient must *himself* be in a state of grace." Up to 'state of grace" I fully agree, I think that is a step too far in the direction of an inappropriately Christian construction put on things here. It is not a state of 'grace' that seeing Dionysus requires, or at least anterior to the grace *charis* which he does indeed endow, there is a not spiritual or metaphysical hospitability, a readiness for relation of a certain quality. Registering sights, 'percipience' does begin to take on an ethical depth here, as it becomes ever plainer how much sight, knowledge and truth are enmeshed. Whose fault would it be if Pentheus had not the believer's grace, by which to see? It is however his negligent error not to be able to see others other than by his own familiar, deductive ascriptions of motive. His failing is one of defective social emotion. Di Benedetto in his first note on 502 (a): Certo, παρ' ἐμοί è necessariamente ambigua ed è condizionata dalla sitazione particolare della vicenda tragica . . . [he compares Diomedes play on proximity and distance *eggus anēr* at *Il.* XIV 110] . . . Con il modulo aveva già giocato Sofocle in *O.R.* 451."

the right *skeuē* for this integral knowledgeability, which is both the gift of and the demand made by Dionysus. This failure in their mode of knowing is the mistake for which he is held so dreadfully accountable by the god, as is the whole House of Kadmos[201].

The scene opened with the messenger's report, the words of an eye-witness. Pentheus has had another opportunity to revise his habitual way of seeing and evaluating. He has shown himself unresponsive to prudent counsel. He seems not to register the counsel of the servant although he himself is committed to a theory of knowledge premised upon autopsy, "seeing things in person". His first words to the Stranger were a question about his identity, 460. His is the everyday, unreflective concept of identity. When we come to the close of this interview, the question is turned back upon him. He answers in the way he expects to be answered, 506-8:

> Di. οὐκ οἶσθ' †ὅτι ζῇς† οὐδ' ὃ δρᾶις οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ.[202]
> Pe. Πενθεύς, Ἀγαυῆς παῖς, πατρὸς δ' Ἐχίονος.
> Di. ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοὔνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ.
>
> Di. You don't know what life you are living, what you are doing or even who you are.
> Pe. Pentheus, Agauē's child, by Echion as father.
> Di. You are suited by your name to end up unfortunate.

Pentheus uses and understands his name only as an instrument (a device simply for connecting him to predecessors and distinguishing him from contemporaries). He fails to understand its *contents*. Inscribed into his existence, in his life as in his name, is the truth about him that will be realized in this drama: he is a man of sorrows, *penthos*. Meaning rises and breaches the surface of language – the contingent (pun) is revealed to be commensurate with the deliberate, but goes unrecognized until it is too late. There is an ill-fated purpose, an end which is not his own, but for which he is meant, *epitēdeios*[203].

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[201] See § 3.3.

[202] On this problematic line, see above § 2.2.1.2 n. 122.

[203] *Epitēdeios*: "made for an end or purpose, fit or adapted for it, suitable, convenient", cf. *IA* 475-6, where Menelaus is swearing to Agamemnon that he has had a genuine change of heart, is speaking clearly, (not *adēlotes*) and from the heart, 'not to any specific end' *epitēdes*: ἦ μὴν ἐρεῖν σοι τἀπὸ καρδίας σαφῶς/ καὶ μὴ 'πίτηδες μηδέν, ἀλλ' ὅσον φρονῶ. "Pentheus" has a meaning and a *telos* which is not one intended by himself, but by some other agency – external and unknown to him – than his own. Karl Meuli argued that Pentheus was a misreading for "Tentheus". He was impatient of *paronomasia*, wishing to discern a language and meaning far deeper than any derived from the new arrangements and innovations of the individual poet Euripides, it is an example of Romantic philology, concerned with the *Kern der Sage*, it treats *nomoi* as having the timeless, 'authentic', independent qualities *physis*, see Meuli, 1946: 1020-1. Cf. Dodds on 367: "Examples of such tragic 'punning' (*etumologein*) are many,".

Pentheus' temper is a fire that has been stoked. The initially sovereign and patronizing tone has gradually given way to the violent reactiveness of an incontinent emotionalism. He will not countenance the insolence of the Stranger and his responses, which so frustrate normal expectation. As the scene draws to a close, he recovers himself and with the aggressiveness of a heavy sarcasm, dispatches the captive to prison, 509-14. The stables where Dionysus is to be held are a container that will not hold its contents. Human vessels have not the capacity to retain the too easily flowing, transient person of the god. The stable is made for tamed horses: this is an undomesticated god very much like a wild creature, even if one with a gentle side (ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' ἡμῖν πρᾶος, 436; δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος, 861).

Not knowing what is of true value, Pentheus consistently acts against his own interests. This manm who reads and predicts human action in terms purely of self-interest, is ignorant of self and of what ought *really* to be his interest. While Pentheus opens the interview, Dionysus has the last word. He is unflustered and confident: "for what must not be does not have to be suffered" ὅτι γὰρ μὴ χρεὼν οὕτοι χρεὼν/παθεῖν, 515-6. What is done and what is borne are indissociable from knowledge, the awareness of what one is doing and what one thinks one is *doing*, but in reality only *suffering*. Pentheus' fate, it is suggested by some interpreters, must be "ordained"[204]. Dionysus himself intimates as much in his closing speech, (πάλαι τάδε Ζεὺς οὑμὸς ἐπένευσεν πατήρ. 1349), although even there he is not necessarily saying that the fate of Thebes had been foreclosed, only that Zeus had consented to a severe punishment for the Kadmeians. He continues to the end to express the failing of the Kadmeians in terms of knowledge and will to knowledge. Pentheus' error is his ignorance. He is a man drunk on himself. Pentheus will have to pay the ransom for his offences, τῶνδ' ἄποιν' ὑβρισμάτων, 516: the wages of a too facilely *abducted* will and quality of intention[205].

What the Stranger is undergoing "now", the god who is present sees[206]. The god is at hand, παρ' ἐμοί, 502. A person is more than one. Agency inheres in this potential for perspective on self, for a multiplicity of self expressed through reflexivity. The too unified Pentheus, the unbastardized son of Agauē and of Echion, has not the depth or dimension to look upon himself, and thus cannot know his acts. He does not see his desires coming, as mortals do

[204] Cf. Seaford's rendering of 515-6: "For I will not have to suffer what is not ordained for me to suffer". Roux: "Soit! En route! Ce qui n'est pas arrêté par le destin, le destin ne saurait l'infliger." Di Benedetto is reliably exact: "Vado. Ciò che non bisogna patire, non bisogna che io lo patisca." Dodds: "'I am ready to go: for what is not to be I have not to suffer' – the negative counterpart of *HF* 311 ὃ χρὴ γὰρ οὐδεὶς μὴ χρεὼν θήσει ποτέ."

[205] On the manner of inference defined as "abduction", see § 5.2.

[206] καὶ νῦν ἃ πάσχω πλησίον παρὼν ὁρᾶι. 500, cf. 800-1, where Pentheus, aporetic, declares: ἀπόρωι γε τῶιδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένωι, / ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται, see 89 below.

not see Dionysus coming. Suddenly, he is there, dreadful, vengeful and sweet. He has different faces[207]. He is complex and multiple. His parts know one another, as Pentheus' do not. Thus in the last words of the episode he speaks with this double subjectivity, which makes for such a sharp contrast with the one-sidedness of Pentheus. The visible and unseen Dionysus, the person within and beside the Stranger, has been denied, but "he is we", 516-18:

> ἀτάρ τοι τῶνδ' ἄποιν' ὑβρισμάτων
> μέτεισι Διόνυσός σ', ὃν οὐκ εἶναι λέγεις·
> ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἀδικῶν κεῖνον ἐς δεσμοὺς ἄγεις.
>
> But ransom for these offences suffered,
> Dionysus, whom you say is not, will pursue you with vengeance,
> For you are doing us wrong when you take him in bonds.

2.2.6 Third Episode: 576-861

We have already seen how by the third dramatic sequence, the episode of Palace Miracles and Pentheus' gradual bewitchment, Pentheus' involuntariness becomes articulated through his delusional state and futile effortfulness[208]. This has been all the more sharply marked through the underscored effortlessness of the manner in which Dionysus' will is realized. In the third episode, furthermore, the problem of the insoluble entanglement of emotions, involuntariness, desire, choice, thought, decision and indecision, becomes increasingly explicit. A terminology of *thumos*, *boulē*, *bouleusis* comes expressly into play. The falling away of decisional faculties in Pentheus, of choice, the capacity for what Aristotle calls *proairesis*, is shown as a gradual, differentiated process. We return to Aristotle on ethics once again then, and thread his theory of agency into a reading of *Bacchae* and the fate of its ever more *ratlos* king[209].

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[207] 861.

[208] See on *ponos* "toil" contrasted with the *otium* and *hēsuchē* of Dionysus § 2.2.1.1 n. 81 and § 3.3.10 n. 269.

[209] *Ratlos*: another helpful German expression, here to qualify Pentheus' aporia. It has the ordinary sense of "helpless", as in "Ich bin völlig ratlos": 'I'm completely at a loss'. The literal meaning is revealing, "without counsel, advice" [*Rat*: derived from the same root as the verb for "talk" *reden*, cf. Old English "rede": 'counsel, advice, account', from which also originally English "to read"]. Decision is "talk in advance with oneself and others", Odysseus is *polymētis*, never *ratlos* for very long. Where talk breaks down, identity will follow. In *Bacchae* the *ratlos* mortal is set against a laughing, *schadenfroh* god. Cf. also "overweening", a common translation of *hybristes*, the obsolete "ween", meant "to think, suppose" or "hope, expect, intend". There is something inherently dangerous in the "awesome", *deinos*, the cognitive capacity of mortals, the multifold agentfulness of persons, something about intending and prospectiveness, that can make persons too easily forget themselves, forget the present and the lessons of the past, in their intention upon the future, forget to attend to the present, *ta paronta* (cf. 395-9).

2.3 *Proairesis*: Authentic Choice

For Aristotle, as we saw, the irrational passions no less than calculation "belong to man". The origin of actions, in anger or appetite, does not qualify them as inculpable. Acts which one might not want to have committed, which one may regret, are not necessarily wholly involuntary. A further differentiation of the categories of volition is introduced with the notion of *proairesis*, a refinement of the idea of the voluntary – *to hekousion* – of which we may say it is a subset.

> ἡ προαίρεσις δὴ ἑκούσιον μὲν φαίνεται, οὐ ταὐτὸν δέ, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ πλέον τὸ ἑκούσιον· τοῦ μὲν γὰρ ἑκουσίου καὶ παῖδες καὶ τἆλλα ζῷα κοινωνεῖ, προαιρέσεως δ' οὔ, καὶ τὰ ἐξαίφνης **ἑκούσια μὲν λέγομεν, κατὰ προαίρεσιν δ' οὔ**.[210]

> Choice, then, seems to be voluntary, but not the same thing as the voluntary; the latter extends more widely. For both children and the lower animals share in voluntary action, but not in choice, and acts done on the spur of the moment we describe as *voluntary but not chosen*.

The French term *gré,* ordinarily translated into English as "will", concerns the "voluntary" or "involuntary" character of acts, but does not exactly correspond, as Greek *hekōn* and *akōn* do not, Vernant argues, to the more loaded English "will" (*la volonté*). Thus Vernant:

> L'animal agît *hekōn*, comme les hommes, quand il suit son inclination propre sans être contraint par une puissance extérieure. Si donc toute décision (*proairesis*) est un acte exécuté de plain gré (*hekōn*), par contre « ce qu'on fait de plein gré n'est pas toujours l'objet d'une décision ».[211]

This is fundamental. Doing something *de plain gré*, "willingly" as it were, need not entail having "willed" it. Decision always entails will, but a willing act does not necessarily entail decision. The maenad is like the animal, acting willingly but not through her own choosing. In the state of innocence and meaninglessness (not sharing meanings with oneself or with others) of the animal, the child and the bacchant, there is no or almost no decisional process.

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[210] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111b 6-10. On *proairesis* see especially Nancy Sherman, 1991.

[211] Vernant 49, in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972.

Only fully competent human intention, which, by definition, has a projected object, *telos*[212], can have and therefore will attribute to others the full imputability of choice taken.

Time and its construal, the construal of oneself as a being *in time*, with the projection of a 'before', *prin* and 'next', *epeita* – this is the necessary condition for the projection of a present, *nun*, and the presence of a self. A sense of self is a sense of time: a past that, by retrospection, we come to 'find' was necessity, *anagkē*; a present, the sensation of experience as a flow, a stream of events and phenomena, having no apparent agent behind them; the opaque future of anticipated and unanticipated possibilities, *elpides*. This is the structure or syntax that must be consciously in place first, to qualify acts as *decided* or *deliberated*. Maenads, animals, children have not been initiated into (or have been released from) this *syntaxis* of events and phenomena. They are willing or unwilling but cannot wholly *will*, in the more precise sense of *choose*, for they cannot take thought in advance and therefore cannot "take up in advance", i.e. "choose", *proairein*.

Human intention traces intentionality everywhere and even displaces its own intentionality, and therefore moral responsibility, onto non-human others; thus the *Unschuldskomödie*, a "comedy of innocence" that Meuli and Burkert discerned in sacrificial killing[213], which they privileged as the central action of Greek religion[214]. Consider Burkert's account of the "normative Greek sacrifice" in which the imputability of the act and the voluntariness of the victim plays such an impressive role in the act of killing and its construction: "Auch das Tier wird mit Wasser besprengt; ‚schüttle dich', ruft Trygaios bei Aristophanes [*Pax* 960 and Scholiast ad loc. . . . Porph. Abst. 2,9;]. Man redet sich ein, die Bewegung des Tieres bedeutet ein, freiwilliges Nicken', ein Ja zur Opferhandlung. Der Stier wird noch einmal getränkt – so

[212] On intentionality and "aboutness", see Dennett, 1987: 117-212 and below, § 3.3.12 n. 315.

[213] Meuli, 1946: 274-8. Burkert, 1966, 1997 [1972], *GR*. See also Bremmer, 1994: 38-54, with good bibliography. On Ritual and Tragedy, seee the landmark essay Burkert, 1966, which in many ways prefigures the later work, Burkert 1997 [1972], and Burkert *GR.* Against the privileging of *Opferritual*, see Ando in Faraone & Naiden [edd.], 2012: 195-200. Our interest here, whatever we decide the status of sacrificial killing in Greek religious life to be, is the clear *import* with which acts are invested, the characterizing emotions which the ritual may even be said to function to transform, certainly to alleviate: guilt and innocence. These would suggest a great deal about the sense of self-conscious human agency that these actors would feel. This is evident in the need they feel to exonerate themselves by the explanation that they are killing under divine commisssion or that it is not *they* who are responsible. An essential advantage of the ritual is to depersonalize acts: an individual is not guilty through sacrifice, only through neglecting to sacrifice. Ritual here is something like a system of techniques for distributing responsibility, intention and desire away from individuals. See also J. Z. Smith's contribution in Hamerton-Kelly [ed.], 1987 for a strong view not quite in agreement with Burkert's. The bibliography is very extensive, for which see the updated English edition of *Homo Necans*, 1983: 2 n. 2, Burkert *GR* 2011 [1977].

[214] Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 8 "Gerade in der Mitte der Religion droht faszinierend blutige Gewalt."

beugt er sein Haupt."[215] Much effort, then, is taken to secure the victim's 'consent' in the reconstructed model of the normal Greek animal sacrifice[216].

Agency is such a fearful and dangerous problem; it cautiously dissimulates itself: "Unter den Körnern im Korb aber war das Messer verborgen, das jetzt aufgedeckt ist [Aristoph. *Pax* 948, Eur. *El.* 810 *IA* 1565]. Mit ihm tritt der, dem die Führungsrolle zufällt im nun beginnenden Drama, der ἱερεύς, auf das Opfertier zu, das Messer noch versteckend, damit das Tier es nicht erblickt."[217] This knife or axe of the sacrificial killing will become itself invested with the personhood of an agent and is not a mere instrument[218]. With this displaced imputation of the ownership of the desire for the killing, the re-attribution or distribution of intention, this drama is from one point of view an elaborate *Einreden*, a 'talking-into' of actors in which the voluntary and the involuntary – the identity of the real agent – are the opposite of what they would otherwise seem.

The sacrifice is a drama of acts that have psychological content; the ritual represents a problem of agency and motivation[219]. Acts are invested with ethical character and this quality of acts is determined by the construal and location of agency: who wanted the act, who initiated it, whose motive did it serve, how are those qualities articulated through the acts? In the drama of an intense situation, how are they disguised and displaced or neutralized and transformed? The *Unschuldskomödie* is a kind of reversed detective story, written by the

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[215] Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 11.

[216] This sacred identity farce continues (identity farce because the identity of the will and therefore of agency is shifted around in the manner that identity is confused in farce). *Bacchae* does of course have such a farcical aspect with its exchange of identities and non-recognitions. On the costume or transvestite scene 4 Dodds, 192 wrote: "Such a situation could easily be exploited as pure farce . . . But here the effect of farcical by-play is to intensify the underlying horror which peeps out in lines like 922 and 934." Tragedy reveals the *Schuld* and its moral emotions, which the *Unschuldskomödie* takes such ingenious psychological and dramatical measures to cover up and neutralize.

[217] Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 12.

[218] Cf. Porph. *Abst.* 2.28-30. Describing an ancient Athenian rite of the killing of the ox at the altar of Zeus Polieus, Pausanias shows vividly how much ritual killing is a problem that is solved by various acts and roles; responsibility and imputability is a central problem. The ox is made to initiate proceedings by eating barley left on an altar left unguarded, and thereby incurring guilt, Paus. 1.24.4.4- 1.24.4.12: τοῦ Διὸς τοῦ Πολιέως κριθὰς καταθέντες ἐπὶ τὸν βωμὸν μεμιγμένας πυροῖς οὐδεμίαν ἔχουσι φυλακήν· . . . One of the priests is called the "ox killer", in an elaborate and contrived play which reveals so starkly the centrality of problem of agency: his role is to kill, toss the murder weapon and flee. The remaining humans as though not knowing the cuplrit, put the axe on trial: καλοῦσι δέ τινα τῶν ἱερέων βουφόνον, <ὃς κτείνας τὸν βοῦν> καὶ ταύτῃ τὸν πέλεκυν ῥίψας – οὕτω γάρ ἐστίν οἱ νόμος – οἴχεται φεύγων· οἱ δὲ ἅτε τὸν ἄνδρα ὃς ἔδρασε τὸ ἔργον οὐκ εἰδότες, ἐς δίκην ὑπάγουσι τὸν πέλεκυν. On the different courts for different qualities of crime, clearly determining qualities of voluntariness and involuntariness, Paus. 1.28 is informative. Particularly significant here is the Court of the Prytaneum (Paus. 1.28. 10. 6- 11.10.), where inanimate things, *ta apsycha*, are put on trial, (Cf. also in the comic setting, the trial of the dog Labes at Ar. *Vesp.* 885 ff.). Pausanias tells of the supposed origin, in the time of the Ur-Athenian kingkind Erectheus, of the trial of the axe and its imputation with guilt for the first ox killing.

[219] "Das Anstößige an diesem Ritus, das schon früh empfunden wurde, liegt darin, daß das ganze so eindeutig und unmittelbar den Menschen zugute kommt." Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 14.

actual agents of the act, in which the anticipated act gives rise to "evidence" of displaced motivation and culpability.

If Pentheus is a kind of sacrificial animal, as the poetry can suggest, what can that mean? Is the sacrificial *Metaphorik* an end in itself, or is it not simply one of the means to explore the primary subject, which is the *import* of situations. This is content, which is indissociable from the import given them by the actors. Does the *Menschenähnlichkeit* of the creature become most clear in the dying of the animal, as Burkert suggests[220]? In what would this *Menschenähnlichkeit*, 'likeness to humans', and *Austauschbarkeit*, 'fungibility' consist, if not in the recognition of the creature as having a perspective, a human-like point of view and therefore being capable of at least a rudimentary sociality or inter-subjectivity. The animal is necessarily construed as a being with something like an inner self, which alone could seem to "desire", "fear", "resist", "acquiesce", "be deceived", "break taboo". This is only more irrefutably the case when it is seen as also possible to invest inanimate objects with a kind of agency and responsibility, as was done in the Prytaneum and the old-fashioned Dipolieia festival with its *buphonia*, ox-killing[221].

The theory of restitution of the animal and the consecration of violence is one built on a sense of the sensitivity of humans to the import of their actions and their actions as presenting themselves as problematic. So did Meuli and Deubner discern in ritual killing, such as that of the the *Buphonia*, the *Scheu* 'timidity'[222] of the agriculturalist in the face of the slaughter and consumption of his "Ackergenossen"[223]. The counterpart of this humane and humanizing *Scheu* is the *Zustimmung*[224], acquiescence, of the victim, which must be secured. It is expressed in the need felt for *Versöhnung* and *Sühnerite*, rites of atonement and reconciliation, that must be ultimately established. This is what we may take here from Burkert's influential interpretation of the Opferritual: in sacrificial ritual as in Tragedy, the pressure of desires or motives and the evaluation of their quality, meaning and consequence, are of absolutely essential significance for participants.

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[220] Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 29: "Im Sterben wurde die Menschenähnlichkeit des Tieres vielleicht am deutlichsten erfaßt. So wird das Beutetier zum Opfer. Vom Gefühl fast brüderlicher Verbundenheit, das der Jäger zum Tier empfindet, wissen viele Beobachter zu berichten; von der Austauchbarkeit von Mensch und Tier im Opfer sprechen die Mythen nicht nur bei den Griechen immer wieder."

[221] Evidence of the Buphonia ritual formed an important source for Burkert's outline of a "normal sacrifice", Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 153-61.

[222] And this *Scheu* is powerfully expressive of self-consciousness, the very opposite of hybristic self-assertiveness. Nevertheless, it is set off by the self-assertiveness of the 'prayer' in the ritual, which Burkert likens in function to the *euchos* in Homer as that is interpreted by Adkins, 1969 an act of speech by which the hero is seen "'asserting his existence, his value and his claims' diese für den Homerischen Sprachgebrauch gegebene Charakteristik paßt gerade für den Platz des Gebets im Opferritual," Burkert, 1997 [1972]: 11.

[223] Meuli, 1946:228-33 "Abwälzen der Schuld am Töten"; "Sühnung, Versöhnung", 247-5.

[224] Meuli, 1946: 266-8.

2.4 Passion: *thumon ekpneōn*

θύοιμ' ἂν αὐτῶι μᾶλλον ἢ θυμούμενος[225]

Men sacrifice voluntarily, but they are commanded to or expected to by gods. They have displaced any question of moral responsibilty for the act, upon the inducement – *to keleuon* – of those external agents, the deathless persons who live and look down from a remote, vertical abroad. Yet, when Agamemnon is induced by a pitiless god to sacrifice his own daughter, Euripides presents this as the matter for the deliberation of a person. A person has the all-important *potential* for a moral and personal depth, which is in fact greater than that of the gods. The sacrifice of Iphigenia is not *necessary*, in the strong, fated sense. Its necessariness must be chosen, acquiesced to and embraced.

What danger will Agamemnon choose to risk: the most abominable outrage of the killing of his own daughter or the disrepute among and possible persecution by the Greek army?[226] It is an unwilling act, certainly, but also one that is subject to prior evaluation; it is in the hands of the actors, not forced upon them. If they are forced, it is only through their own values (their effective values rather than those they may wish were their effective, i.e. finally acted upon, values), that they are "compelled". In other words, if the protagonists are compelled, it is by a compulsion they had it in their power to deny, as Menelaus' reversal demonstrates[227]. As Aristotle puts it, "not every *hekousion*, willing act, is *proaireton*, deliberate", which is to say, subject to prior evaluative decision-making. In what does *proairesis* consist, he asks. Choice is not appetite, "still less is it anger", *thumos*, for "acts due to anger are thought less than any others, to be objects of choice."[228]. Irrational creatures – animals, children – share in voluntary action but not in choice[229].

When Dionysus emerges from the palace, magically emancipated, to the relief of his anxious followers, he thinks they have fallen into *athumia*, "disspiritedness" or "despondency", 610-11:

εἰς ἀθυμίαν ἀφίκεσθ', ἡνίκ' εἰσεπεμπόμην,
Πενθέως ὡς ἐς σκοτεινὰς ὁρκανὰς πεσούμενος;

[225] "I would burn offerings to him rather than get enraged", 794.

[226] Eur. *IA* 506-42.

[227] Eur. *IA* 471-503.

[228] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111b 18-19: θυμὸς δ' ἔτι ἧττον· ἥκιστα γὰρ τὰ διὰ θυμὸν κατὰ προαίρεσιν εἶναι δοκεῖ.

[229] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111 b 11-19. For Platonic definitions and exploration of *thumos*, as one component of the tripartite self see Plato's *Republic* IV, esp. Pl. *R*. 435b. 1– 441c. 8.

Did you come into despondency, when I was sent in,
That I would fall into the dark fences of Pentheus?

He wants to breathe fresh cheer into them, and explains that he has come away all too easily; he has saved himself with no effort at all, 614. The *brochoi*, knots or meshes, of Pentheus have had no power to bind and contain him. The bacchants would be at a loss if anything ever happened to him, but he is reassuringly masterful, 612-15. He describes the contrast (already identified above in the palace scenes[230]) of the striving, futile man and the self-possessed Stranger, who throughout is distinguished for his *hēsuchia*, calm (636). Pentheus is not just deluded, misapprehending and misjudging the apparent for the real, 616-19, but a man "panting out *thumos*" – puffing spirit, life, passion, heart or mind – θυμὸν ἐκπνέων 620. The picture of Pentheus drawn by Dionysus here, 616-41, is of a leaky man, a man of uncontained rage, *thumos* and *orgē*, who has set himself against the consummately sealed-up and impenetrable figure, which is a god[231]. The mortal exhausts himself to no avail, stabbing at phantoms. However much he manifests a swelling up of emotions, however much *thumos* he expels, the god will only show a serene contempt[232]. A wise man is contained, he moderates his *orgē*[233], the god explains, 640-1.

His panting, like his threats, his calculations like his anger, avail Pentheus nothing. This "leakiness", which by the end will become the "drippingness" of his physical matter[234], is exemplified in ἔα ἔα, 644[235], his utterance when he emerges and detects the liberated Stranger. It is an emission that Dodds found to be "a gasp of astonishment, perhaps representing the sound of a sharp intake of breath"[236]. An objective of the poet, as well as his technique, is to make the invisible manifest, to make the impalpable concrete. The nature of Pentheus, in which anger and desire – *thumos* and *epithumia* – are so preponderant, is "brought out" very materially in scenes such as this, when, drawn out from inside the

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[230] § 2.2.6.

[231] 634-7: κόπου δ' ὕπο/ διαμεθεὶς ξίφος παρεῖται· πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὢν ἀνὴρ/ ἐς μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησ'. ἥσυχος δ' ἐκβὰς ἐγὼ/ δωμάτων ἥκω πρὸς ὑμᾶς, Πενθέως οὐ φροντίσας.

[232] Just so again later: however terribly he breathes threats Dionysus knows him for what he is as he does not know himself ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρὶν αἷσι δεινὸς ἦν, 856 . . . ὡς πέφυκεν ἐν μέρει θεὸς/ δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος, 860 -1.

[233] *Orgē* is the variant used for *thumos* in Homer.

[234] Dripping: 711, 742, 1129-39, 1163-4: καλὸς ἀγὼν †ἐν αἵματι στάζουσαν/ χέρα περιβαλεῖν τέκνου†, 1216-21, 1299-1300. The bacchants themselves are "leaky", drippers and heavy-breathers, 711, and the night is a broken vessel, *sathros* [cracked, corrupt], which cannot contain them, in which they are given to overflow, τοῦτ' ἐς γυναῖκας δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν, 487. Voice itself, either checked, edited or spontaneously flowing, typically overflowing the vessel of person in Tragedy, is always a clear index of self and its control or loss. After the great effort of *sparagmos* the maenads do not articulate but expel feeling or emotional energy, panting, groaning and crying out, 1131-3: ἦν δὲ πᾶσ' ὁμοῦ βοή, / ὁ μὲν στενάζων ὅσον ἐτύγχαν' ἐμπνέων, / αἱ δ' ὠλόλυζον.

[235] On 810 see § 3.1 n. 1 and cf. also ll. 586, 596.

[236] Dodds ad loc. He continues. "being a noise, not a word, it is often doubled and placed *extra versum*, as here, and is naturally confined to excited dialogue or monologues; Eur. uses it very freely (cf. 1280)".

palace, we *see* his incontinence. We learn, again and again in Tragedy, the wastefulness and futility of incontinence itself. Tragedy dramatizes the dangers of *koros* and *hybris*, the excess of desire, appetite and self-regard for which mortals must pay their tragic ransom, *apoina.*

Once introduced, the *thumos* of Pentheus becomes an idea that is developed over the rest of the play. The messenger who comes into the city and reports the doings of the bacchants, wondrous and appalling, 677-774, has a cautiousness regarding the temper of kings[237]. He asks in advance if he may speak freely to Pentheus or if he must check his words[238]. This reflexive sensitivity, in a servant, to the effect of one's own words, heightens the deficient capacity of Pentheus, who lacks precisely this sensitivity. The messenger knows only too well what, very judiciously, he calls "the speed and too king-like sharpness-of-*thumos*" of the sovereign's mind, 670-1:

> τὸ γὰρ τάχος σου τῶν φρενῶν δέδοικ', ἄναξ,
> καὶ τοὐξύθυμον καὶ τὸ βασιλικὸν λίαν.
>
> I fear your mind's speed, my lord,
> and its keen-spiritedness and very kingliness.

An interpolated line follows, attributed to Pentheus, in which he takes up the idea of anger. He has assured the messenger that he speaks with immunity, *athōios* 672, and he says that "with the just one must not be angry, (become upset)" [τοῖς γὰρ δικαίοις οὐχὶ θυμοῦσθαι χρεών.] 673[239]. The importance of *thumos* is underscored further when Dionysus, in the exchange leading up to the strange transformation of Pentheus' cognitive faculties that

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[237] This is not misplaced, considering such famous, intemperate reactions as those of, for example, Agamemnon in *Iliad* I, or Sophocles' Oedipus in *Oedipus Tyrannos* and Kreon in *Antigone*.

[238] 668-9: θέλω δ' ἀκοῦσαι πότερά σοι παρρησίαι/ φράσω τὰ κεῖθεν ἢ λόγον στειλώμεθα·

[239] Nauck deleted this line, most modern editions retain it [Diggle, Grégoire & Meunier, Kopff]. Seaford on 673: "this line is suspect because similar to fr. 287.1 τοῖς πράγμασιν γὰρ οὐχὶ θυμοῦσθαι χρεών· [*Bellerophon*], and because an inept and flat sentiment in the context." but Dodds ad loc.: "The partial coincidence with fr. 287.1 τοῖς πράγμασιν γὰρ οὐχὶ θυμοῦσθαι χρεών·, is not a reason for rejecting this line, since Eur. often echoes his earlier phrases; the antithesis τοῖς δικαίοις ~ τὸν ὑποθέντα is a reason for retaining it." For Roux ad loc. "rien n'est plus grec que de motiver sa conduite dans un cas particulier en la rattachant à une maxime générale." It is really not an inept or flat touch of irony, it serves to enhance the picture of Pentheus' self-ignorance. It anticipates also the problem of Dionysus' handling of the Kadmeians, the difficulties with his version of justice. It is not clear how far we can say Dionysus is "just". What is clear is that *thumousthai*, to be enraged, which is what the god is from the start, for all he wears a laughing face, is an emotion or condition which serves the mortal poorly. The notion of justice or being "in the right" is not particularly helpful in this situation. In his dramatic situations Euripides habitually draws attention through puns and paronomasia to the terms of greatest significance, such as in τοὐξύθυμον . . . θυμοῦσθαι.

begins at least from 810[240], warns him that it were better to *thuein*, "burn sacrifices", "smoke", "cause to seethe" than *thumousthai*, "rage", "be made to seethe"[241], at 794-5:

> θύοιμ' ἂν αὐτῶι μᾶλλον ἢ θυμούμενος
> πρὸς κέντρα λακτίζοιμι θνητὸς ὢν θεῶι.
>
> I would burn offerings to him rather than get enraged
> Kicking against the pricks, a mortal against a god.

Thuein denotes both "rage, seethe", "desire eagerly" and "offer up by burning, sacrifice", (send up sweet smells, "sublimate"). It is also connected by the poets with the bacchants who elsewhere are called *thuiades*, inspired or mad women, by Aeschylus[242]. Smoke is also very often not only a trace of the gods' presence, for the means of communicating human reverence to the gods, but very specifically a trace of the presence of Dionysus, who is not only usually there where humans share a certain quality of festive community (burning meat, drinking wine, singing songs), but, more than any other god, is felt to be accompanied by fire[243].

There is a kind of escalation, over the course of the work, from *thumos*, through *oxythumia*, and [*thumousthai*] to *prothumia*, which terminates in the metamorphosis of this man of figured *thumos* into the literal *thuma*, sacrificial victim, the flesh for burning, a savage (*ōmestēs*, which means also "raw", unprocessed, not yet burnt for consumption) offering struck down for Thebes to feast the gods. Pentheus is *prothumos*, eager, to spy upon the maenads, whose motives he is sure are base. This *prothumia*, zeal, will gradually displace his sense of shame, *aidōs*, that reflexive, socially indispensable emotion, 828-30:

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[240] On the transformation that begins from the point at 810 "Ah!", see March, 1989: 41; Burnett, 1970; Rosenmeyer, 1983: 387; Kalke, 1985; on 810 see § 3.1 n. 1 and cf. also ll. 586, 596.

[241] These words are indeed etymologically linked, as smoke and breath are connected: *LSJ* sees *thumos* as rightly derived from *thuein* "rage, seethe, pant" by Plato in the *Cratylus* 419e: "θυμὸς" δὲ ἀπὸ τῆς <θύσεως> καὶ ζέσεως τῆς ψυχῆς ἔχοι ἂν τοῦτο τὸ ὄνομα. *See* also Burkert *GR*: 102 "Bei Homer gerade erst im Ansatz zu fassen ist die Bedeutungsverschieben, die das alte Wort für 'räuchern', *thyein*, zum normalen Wort für 'opfern' schlechthin werden ließ.", (Cf. Latin *fumus*). [Note the *zesis*, 'bubbling, fermentation', of matter that seems to live, like wine that 'matures' and has a life-span].

[242] Aesch. *Sept*. 496-8: αὐτὸς δ' ἐπηλάλαξεν, ἔνθεος δ' Ἄρει /βακχᾷ πρὸς ἀλκὴν θυιὰς ὥς, φόβον βλέπων. As a "blood-dripping" frenzying bacchant at Aesch. *Sept*. 836: θυιὰς αἱματοσταγεῖς; A. *Supp*. 562-4: μαινομένα πόνοις ἀτί- /μοις ὀδύναις τε κεντροδα-/λήτισι θυιὰς Ἥρας. And earlier still, in Alcman fr. 63 Ναΐδες τε Λαμπάδες τε Θυιάδες τε, [*Poetae melici Graeci*, ed. Page, D.L. 1962]. Pentheus in the first episode had wanted to tear down and turn upside down the seat of augury of Teiresias, threatened that he would have his priestly insignia, his fillets "tossed to the winds and storms, *thuellaisin*", 349-50: ἄνω κάτω τὰ πάντα συγχέας ὁμοῦ, / καὶ στέμματ' ἀνέμοις καὶ θυέλλαισιν μέθες·. The idea of breath that gathers and becomes the destructive storm of returning fury is developed in this imagery. The *thumos* of the mortal is sound and fury, that in the environs of the unrecognized divinity, becomes manifest as indeed signifying nothing.

[243] See § 5.3 on Dionysus and fire.

Pe. τίνα στολήν; ἦ θῆλυν[244]; ἀλλ' αἰδώς μ' ἔχει.
Di. οὐκέτι θεατὴς μαινάδων πρόθυμος εἶ;
Pe. στολὴν δὲ τίνα φὴις ἀμφὶ χρῶτ' ἐμὸν βαλεῖν;

Pe. A dress? A woman's? But shame will take hold of me.
D. Are you no longer very eager to be a spectator of the maenads?
Pe. What dress then do you mean I should cast on my flesh?

Dionysus is disassembling the structure of Pentheus' will, which has always been too shakily constructed an edifice, one that is not earthquake-proof, too easily toppled by the seismic movements of the Dionysiac body[245]. Over the course of these hundred-odd lines, Pentheus will undergo the inward change that will be made very dramatically manifest through his transvestiture, his outward transformation into an ineffectively, ridiculously disguised female bacchant. That make-over will take place offstage, within the palace. A choral ode, which can function both to generate a sense of the extended passage of time or as a kind of effacement of time, is sung, 862-911. Dionysus returns to stage first and calls Pentheus to come out, 912-3:

σὲ τὸν πρόθυμον ὄνθ' ἃ μὴ χρεὼν ὁρᾶν
σπεύδοντά τ' ἀσπούδαστα, Πενθέα λέγω,

You, the man who is over-eager [*prothumon*] to see what he must not
Striver after the unstriveable, I mean Pentheus,

At these high moments, Pentheus is characterized through the quality of his desiring. For Dionysus, working out the *telos* of revenge, this is what is definite about Pentheus: he is a panting, wrathful man who, in ignorance of what he himself is doing, fights with divinity. As the action approaches the climax of Pentheus' life, the incommensurateness of circumstance and desire is again given another very powerful figuration by the poet. The maenads have spied out the spy. They are trying to hit him in any manner they can, with stones, spears, their *thursoi,* 1095-1100. Yet at this stage, their attempts to topple the conspicuous man, (which is what a king is), are as ineffective as the king's earlier threats

[244] *Thēlun*: "female", on the subject of play with significant words, I have always suspected that Euripides does cause in *Bacchae* the feminine and female to be linked, in a nexus made up of threads of lexical connection, with the "abundant or swelling" *thēlein*, poetic *thalleien* [cf. 1185-7: νέος ὁ μόσχος ἄρ-/ τι γένυν ὑπὸ κόρυθ' ἁπαλότριχα / κατάκομον θάλλει., where it is used by a still non-compos mentis Agauē of her dead son, whom she takes for a bullock that she thinks she has hunted down, which nevertheless she describes in terms that could be used of a pubescent boy, just "sprouting" its first growth of hair]; and with the central problem of desire and willingness, *thelein*.
[245] 576-603, on which see Seaford's detailed remarks at Seaford, 1966 pp. 195-8. For the physical house as bacchic body, a confusion apparently quite deliberate and consistent, around Dionysus Cf. *TrGF* 3 Radt Aesch. *Edonians* fr. 58 ἐνθουσιᾷ δὴ δῶμα, βακχεύει στέγη.

against Dionysus, (who the Stranger is): οὐκ ἤνυτον, 1100. Euripides' narrating messenger says of the situation, 1101-2:

> κρεῖσσον γὰρ ὕψος τῆς προθυμίας ἔχων
> καθῆσθ' ὁ τλήμων, ἀπορίαι λελημμένος.
>
> For the wretched man was seated, seized in aporia,
> At a height, higher than *prothumia*, [the bacchants' zeal or high eagerness].

Without realizing it, Pentheus has been like the bacchants all along, the zealots who can realize or know nothing about themselves. All have been broken down or crippled as to their faculty for counsel with self or other. All in common have had destroyed or fatally enfeebled the capacity to evaluate, to judge and choose in advance. All have been passive victims of emotional states, and this has been marked by their subjection to *thumos*, a susceptibility to *athumia* and an injudicious and unrealistic *prothumia.* In this light, *thumos* is truly a phase or category of *mania*, another kind of *elaphra lussa*, "light madness"[246]. Its consequence is like that of *mania*; the body loses the agency of self. It becomes like that of an an animal, flesh and breath and involuntary emissions of sound, without that hard-to-define and impossible-to-locate quality, which is mind, spirit or identity: the person.

Pentheus is reduced utterly, as Thebes will be. He becomes the dripping and scattered remnants of raw flesh (οὗ σῶμα μοχθῶν μυρίοις ζητήμασιν, 1220)[247]. Utterly abject, unprocessed, unsublimateable in the consoling rites of death, untransformed by human intention and therefore belonging to that chaotic dimension from which knowledge and relation are precluded. It is in bitter irony that Kadmos identifies the massacred Pentheus, once a breathing, fuming, wrathful and desirous human being – a creature of *thumos* – with a sacrifice to send up to the gods, the object *thuma*, 1246-7:

> καλὸν τὸ θῦμα καταβαλοῦσα δαίμοσιν
> ἐπὶ δαῖτα Θήβας τάσδε κἀμὲ παρακαλεῖς.

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[246] On *elaphra lussa* see § 2.2.1 n. 81. On *erān epithumia mania* in see Dover's discussion in *Greek Homosexuality*, with good notes on Plato's handling of these terms, 1989 [1978]: 43 "Prodikos in the late fifth century defined eros as 'desire doubled', using for 'desire' the very general word epithūmia (of which the verb is epithūmein) and adding that 'eros doubled is insanity' (B7). So too Xen. *Mem*. iii 9.7 . . . one calls substantial distortion of a person's thinking 'insanity'. Frequently eros and *erān* are treated as synonymous with *epithūmia* and *epithūmein*;".

[247] 1216-20. For the nocturnal rites of raw-flesh-eating of Dionysus Zeagreus, see the fragment from Euripides' *Cretans TGF* Nauck[2] Eur. fr. 472. 11-12 καὶ νυκτιπόλου Ζαγρέως βροντὰς/ τοὺς ὠμοφάγους δαίτας τελέσας. For this savage face of dionysus see also Detienne, 1977; Detienne & Vernant, 1979.

A fine *thuma* [sacrifice] cast down for the *daimōns*, [gods]
The feast you summon Thebes and me to.

2.5 Desire: *ei bouloio*

Choice is not wish or desire, *boulēsis*, Aristotle argued.[248] *Boulēsis* is "near", *suneggus*, to *proairesis* but different, insofar as one can wish for the impossible, but no serious person can be said to choose, 'seize by prior decision', *proairein,* impossible things: *ta adunata*. One may wish to live forever, even though it is impossible, but one does not deliberate on how to do so: βούλησις δ' ἐστὶ <καὶ> τῶν ἀδυνάτων, οἷον ἀθανασίας. This example proffered of the impossible wish – that for eternal life – is one of peculiar suggestiveness in the vicinity of this god, whose mysteries were founded upon the promise of deliverance and life after death.

The limit set upon human life, the bourne from which no traveller returns, is a strange, immaterial barrier that perplexes the mind out of thought. From its earliest origins apparently, mortality was the border at which Tragedy encamped. It struck its *skēnē,* tent, on the bank of the river border separating mortal life and immortal, transforming into an existential threshold, with all its power to deepen events, the beach at Aulis or Troy, along which it so often set up its actions, or the city between two rivers, Thebes where Dionysus, the hybrid of mortal and immortal has arrived: πάρειμι Δίρκης νάμαθ' Ἰσμηνοῦ θ' ὕδωρ, 5[249]. Mortality, ignorance and that surplus, the excess of vitality and appetite, which is the mark of human beings, this is the stuff the Tragic poets use to shape, *poiein*, their works.

Bacchae (like *Iphigenia at Aulis*) is the story of the accomplishment, *telein*, of the god's desire and the frustration of human desires. Dionysus desires from mortals. He desires their recognition and he desires revenge when he is not recognized[250]. He wishes to be wished for by mortals, "even if they do not wish" to wish that, 39-42:

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[248] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111 b 20-30. *Boulēsis* comes from the verb *boulomai*, defined as follows in Chantraine: 189 *s.v. boulomai* "sens : «désirer, vouloir» . Le sens et l'emploi de βούλομαι se trouvent déterminés par ses rapports avec θέλω, ἐθέλω, lesquels ont varié et se présentent en gros de la façon suivante: chez Homère βούλομαι est beaucoup moins fréquent que ἐθέλω qui est le verbe usuel signifiant «vouloir», tandis que βούλομαι signifie proprement «désirer, préférer», . . . Le dérive le plus important est βουλή «volonté, décision, plan, conseil», d'ù le sens d' «assemblée des ancien, Conseil», etc." See Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 58-9.

[249] Ignorance of the day of death in Aeschylus, Prometheus took away the knowledge of the fated death and the antidote, *pharmakon*, he compensated it with was *elpis*, 'hopefulness', 'expectation', which the chorus of Ocean's daughters finds a great benefit, *meg' ōphelēma,* Aesch. *PV* 248-51. On *elpis* see also see § 3.1, § 4.3.9 n. 183, and *elpis* contrasted with *melein* see § 3.3.3 p. 176 n. 170.

[250] Recognition: τἀκεῖ χορεύσας καὶ καταστήσας ἐμὰς/ τελετάς, ἵν' εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς. 21-2; φανέντα θνητοῖς δαίμον' ὃν τίκτει Διί 42; 45-50. Revenge: 516-8; 1330-52.

δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει,
ἀτέλεστον οὖσαν τῶν ἐμῶν βακχευμάτων,
Σεμέλης τε μητρὸς ἀπολογήσασθαί μ' ὕπερ
φανέντα θνητοῖς δαίμον' ὃν τίκτει Διί.

For this city must learn it well, even should it not wish to,
What it means to remain uninitiated into my bacchic acts,
And I must defend the honour of Semelē, my mother
Appearing to mortals as the *daimōn* whom she bears to Zeus.

Dionysus, according to the always helpfully exegetical Teiresias, wishes to be revered and honoured by all alike. He wants no mortal person – *thnētos* – wishing for the same, that is, to be distinguished and magnified as he wishes to be, 208-9:

ἀλλ' ἐξ ἁπάντων βούλεται τιμὰς ἔχειν
κοινάς, διαριθμῶν δ' οὐδέν' αὔξεσθαι θέλει.

But from all alike he wants to have honours,
He wants to be magnified while distinguishing no-one.

He desires to lift mortals out of the practical mode of the agora, in which humans must work, through labour and negotiation, towards the realization of their desires. He causes talking, exchanging, transacting mortals – city-dwelling, inter-active humans[251] – to dance and to sing: τὰκεῖ χορεύσας καὶ καταστήσας ἐμὰς/τελετάς, 21-2, 55-63. The needs of the body are experienced as pains and desires. Pleasure, relief and release from the burdensome and ongoing (otherwise uninterrupted) effort of the satisfaction of needs and desires is what Dionysus offers. He displaces the project of accomplishing practical *telos*, through introducing a different *quality* of objective and a different *mode* of satisfaction and pleasure. The realization he brings is the consummation or completeness that is achieved through his *teletai*. He wants these to be authentically desired by mortals.

We may wish for things outside of our own control, such as that "a particular actor or athlete should win in a competition"[252], but there is no *proairesis* when it concerns things that cannot be brought about by one's own efforts, *di' hautou prachthenta*:

[251] 13-20, 48-50.

[252] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111 b 24.

προαίρεσις μὲν γὰρ οὐκ ἔστι τῶν ἀδυνάτων, καὶ εἴ τις φαίη προαιρεῖσθαι, δοκοίη ἂν ἠλίθιος εἶναι· βούλησις δ' ἐστὶ <καὶ> τῶν ἀδυνάτων, οἷον ἀθανασίας. καὶ ἡ μὲν βούλησίς ἐστι καὶ περὶ τὰ μηδαμῶς δι' αὑτοῦ πραχθέντα ἄν, οἷον ὑποκριτήν τινα νικᾶν ἢ ἀθλητήν· προαιρεῖται δὲ τὰ τοιαῦτα οὐδείς, ἀλλ' ὅσα οἴεται γενέσθαι ἂν δι' αὑτοῦ.[253]

For choice cannot relate to impossibles, and if anyone said he chose them he would be thought silly; but there may be a wish even for impossibles, e.g. for immortality. And wish may relate to things that could in no way be brought about by one's own efforts, e.g. that a particular actor or athlete should win in a competition; but no one chooses such things, but only the things that he thinks could be brought about by his own efforts.

Wish relates more to ends, choice to means, for Aristotle[254]. He seems to suggest that wishes are more given, while the choice between them – which to activate – is more open and variable. In *Bacchae* the impossible is expressed as that which is not proper to mortals to "have in mind" or "intend", *to mē thnata phronein.* Acting as if not mortal, not limited, not inter-subjective, but solipsistically, alone, a subject surveying a world of objects and persons as objects among other objects – this is *hybris*. It means to think and act in a manner unbecoming to an ephemeral, fleshly human with a single, time-bound perspective amongst countless others. The wish to live forever finds its parallel in the model of the man who forgets his mortality, forgets himself and lives as one who does not die. The chorus elaborates this theme in song, which is otherwise expressed so strongly in the action of the play, Pentheus' character, desires and fate. In the first stasimon, 370-433, they sing about the effects on life of hankering after the impossible, of not realizing what one's true interests are. Pursuing unrealistic things is a sure way to lose what is in fact possible; it is the way of the mad and the ill-advised, *kakobouloi*, 395-401:

τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία,
τό τε μὴ θνατὰ φρονεῖν
βραχὺς αἰών· ἐπὶ τούτωι
δὲ τίς ἂν μεγάλα διώκων
τὰ παρόντ' οὐχὶ φέροι; μαι-
νομένων οἵδε τρόποι καὶ
κακοβούλων παρ' ἔμοιγε φωτῶν.

[253] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111 b 20-26.

[254] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111 b 26-7: ἔτι δ' ἡ μὲν βούλησις τοῦ τέλους ἐστὶ μᾶλλον, ἡ δὲ προαίρεσις τῶν πρὸς τὸ τέλος.

Science is not wisdom,
Thinking not mortal thoughts
A short life, in this light
Who would pursue great things
And not attain what is there? Of the
Maddened are these the ways and
Of those of bad counsel, to my mind.

"Science is not wisdom", may mean here, at least in one sense, that the objects of desire require revising. Mortals need to *look again* at what they consider to be the better objects of their wishing and working towards.

In the fourth stasimon, 977-1032, there are further impressive passages where these themes of desire, time, mortality and sense are drawn together. The bacchants sing of he who is unjust in his judgement, abnormal in his *orgē* "temper, emotions": he is "mad in his guts about the bacchic *orgia* and [his] mother", 998-9. Pentheus is frantic, they say, distraught in his *lēma*, "will, desire, purpose", 1000[255]. He thinks he can overcome the indomitable by force, 1001. Again, as at 398, *ta megala* is other than what has been recognized[256]. It is plainer, more visible, its meaning is unconcealed. It is this form of "greatness", not unavailable to mortals, which belongs to Dionysus and leads not only to a longer life, (implicit at 397: βραχὺς αἰών) but to a life closer in kind to that of the blessed, *makaroi*, and the immortal, *athanatoi*.

The Dionysiac bearing and mode of evaluating leads mortals to that which is beautiful and noble, *ta kala*. The bacchants are celebrating their desire and expressing it simultaneously. It is not a desire for impossible, unrealizable things, *ta adunata*; this is a healthy form of wishing whose fulfillment is in Dionysus, the god who brings the gift of this desire and the recognition of the nature of this desire. The recognition and consciousness of the gift is inseparable from its value, the double merit which is the corollary of the double guilt of the man who commits a crime in ignorance, drunkenly, and must pay twice[257], 997-1010[258]:

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[255] *Lēma*: Derived from λάω, "see" [*LSJ s.v. λάω* 1] or "seize, grasp, hold". *A* candidate for a Greek term for "Will"? See Snell, 1928 and Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972, who make much of the point that the Greeks supposedly had no word for 'will'.

[256] Somewhat like the *Megala Dionysia* itself, this festival of drama, not only the largest festival, but which is perhaps also deeper, containing more than one may have appreciated.

[257] See § 2.2.2 n. 132 on Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113b 30-3.

[258] Dodds ad loc.: "This passage is the hardest in the play and full of textual uncertainties." Dodds' discussion of the text and its problems and the "best" suggestions is extensive. Rijksbaron ad loc. is also detailed in his comment and includes a discussion of interpretations and their merits subsequent to Dodd's publication (so since 1944). He settles on an interpretation that combines that of Dodds and of Kirk. I have offered here what I think is a defensible and faithful adherence to the corrupt text, which I make no effort to repair. I wish to retain what I regard as an appropriate awkwardness in my translation from Ancient Greek to contemporary English.

ὃς ἀδίκωι γνώμαι παρανόμωι τ' ὀργᾶι
†περὶ βάκχι' ὄργια ματρός τε σᾶς†
μανείσαι πραπίδι
παρακόπωι τε λήματι στέλλεται,
τὰνίκατον ὡς κρατήσων βίαι.
†γνώμαν σώφρονα θάνατος ἀπροφάσιστος
εἰς τὰ θεῶν ἔφυ
βροτείω τ' ἔχειν ἄλυπος βίος.
τὸ σοφὸν οὐ φθόνω χαίρω θηρεύου-
σα τὰ δ' ἕτερα μεγάλα φανερὰ τῶν ἀεὶ
ἐπὶ τὰ καλὰ βίον,†
ἦμαρ ἐς νύκτα τ' εὐ-
αγοῦντ' εὐσεβεῖν, τὰ δ' ἔξω νόμιμα
δίκας ἐκβαλόντα τιμᾶν θεούς.

He who with unjust mind and lawless mood [*orgē*]
†Concerning bacchic *orgia* and your mother's†
With raving heart
And frantic will is getting ready,
As if by violence he will master the indomitable.
Death, which suffers no pretexts, plants a healthy mind
In regard of divine matters
And a life befitting mortals is painless.
I don't begrudge them their art but I delight in pursu-
ing other, great things plain to see
That belong to those who pursue always beauty, life
And day into night comporting themselves
Finely in reverence, casting out what is out-
side of law and honouring gods.

In *Bacchae* we witness the spectacle of "pursuits", "hunting down" (*diōkein*, *thēreueien*), of that "light frenzy", which is desire for the impossible set in contrast with the joyful expression of desire for the appropriately desirable. We hear report of the hunting down of immortals by mortals and of a mortal by an immortal – the spectre is consistently of contrasted qualities of wishing. The reflected upon, the planned and consummated is contrasted with the unreflected. Pure desires are contrasted with impure[259]. The desire of

[259] θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον· 890.

humans, when it is unhealthy, when it reflects on the accomplishment of its goals, but is unreflexive as to the meaning of those goals, is never finally consummated. The healthy desire for Dionysus, and of Dionysus, illuminates the dangerous and destructive character of human libidinal life, when that is either excessively spontaneous or too excessively calculating. The unlimitedness of human desires, the hybris of unchecked, unmodified or unarticulated and unevaluated wishing, always ends in calamity.

It is impossible, or should be impossible, for Pentheus to observe the rites of the maenads and remain, one way or another, uninitiated. Dionysus warns him that it is "unlawful" for him to see or hear them: "It is not sanctioned for you to hear, although it is worth knowing"[260]. At that point, Pentheus thinks he is only being baited "to want" to see and hear all the more. He does not recognize limitation or impossibility, only temptation, a further incitement to desire: "You trick it out cleverly, so that I should wish to hear"[261]. Pentheus' destiny will be to come to wish for what he ought never to have wished for, and to misapprize the object of his wishing. Dionysus brings about his plan by operating upon Pentheus' faculties of desire. When he begins to bring Pentheus most evidently under his control, in order to accomplish his stated objective of revenge, it is to ignite this desire to see, that Dionysus again returns, 809-11:

> Pe. ἐκφέρετέ μοι δεῦρ' ὅπλα, σὺ δὲ παῦσαι λέγων.
> Di. ἆ·
> βούλῃ σφ' ἐν ὄρεσι συγκαθημένας ἰδεῖν;
>
> Pe. Bring me my armour here, and you, stop talking.
> Di. Ah.
> Do you wish to see them sitting together in the mountains?

Dionysus will soon after explain quite explicitly what he will do to Pentheus. He has scrambled his volitional faculties, disjointed the structure of his will as later he will enable mother and aunts in the disjointing of the young king's body[262]. At the conclusion of the long third episode, in its "Temptation Scene", as Dodds designated it, Dionysus leaves us in no doubt that desire and consciousness, the union or schism between the recognized and unrecognized objectives, is of very great import here. The Stranger tells Dionysus, his own

[260] οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ', ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναι. 474.

[261] εὖ τοῦτ' ἐκιβδήλευσας, ἵν' ἀκοῦσαι θέλω. 475.

[262] 1125-8: λαβοῦσα δ' ὠλέναισ' ἀριστερὰν χέρα, / πλευροῖσιν ἀντιβᾶσα τοῦ δυσδαίμονος / ἀπεσπάραξεν ὦμον, οὐχ ὑπὸ σθένους / ἀλλ' ὁ θεὸς εὐμάρειαν ἐπεδίδου χεροῖν.

self, to infiltrate Pentheus cognitively, in order to make him wish for that which he would not otherwise, that which the god wishes him to desire, 850-3:

πρῶτα δ' ἔκστησον φρενῶν,
ἐνεὶς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν· ὡς φρονῶν μὲν εὖ
οὐ μὴ θελήσηι θῆλυν ἐνδῦναι στολήν,
ἔξω δ' ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν ἐνδύσεται.

Firstly, stand him out of his mind,
Putting in him a light frenzy; since in his right mind
He would not wish to put on a woman's dress,
But when you drive him out of his wits, he'll put it on.

And thus we see the Stranger, Dionysus, bringing to consummation his own will[263], by the penetration of the casements of this king's too willful mind. This is the activation of parts of Pentheus over which he has no control, because he has not first himself recognized, has not made *himself* an object of thought, to do which is the effect of the intending mind. The god's own disguise has in no way been penetrated by the obdurately unfortunate (*schetlios*, *dustuches*, *athlios*, *tlēmōn*[264]) and unseeing king. This kin, a cousin of the god, who, like his aunts before, ought least of all to commit such an error[265], disastrously traces no family resemblance to Zeus in his interlocutor. Dionysus – who discourses with himself, talks to himself as if to another, always recognizing at the same time that the audience of his thoughts and counsels is himself – is the foil to Pentheus, who does not recognize others and will not himself be recognized. He is a man who has not first recognized what and that he is[266].

When Pentheus exits at 846, despite the intermittent gasps of volitional resistance[267] (which express how poorly he understands his situation, since they brilliantly capture the absence of reflexiveness in him), he has fallen into the hands of the living god. To control a mortal's mind is to control the person entirely. Dionysus wants mortal bodies in certain states, in dynamic modes, in dancing postures, but that is not enough for him: the sufficient condition for him is to have also the minds of mortals in authentic desire, having the same desires as the god. Mortals must become commensurate with Dionysus' wishes.

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[263] Dionysus' plan: 47-54.

[264] *Schetlios*: 358; *dustuches*: 508; *athlios*: 1139, 1216; *tlēmōn:* 1058, 1102.

[265] 26-7: ἐπεί μ' ἀδελφαὶ μητρός, ἃς ἥκιστ' ἐχρῆν, / Διόνυσον οὐκ ἔφασκον ἐκφῦναι Διός.

[266] 506, on which see § 2.2.1.2 n. 122.

[267] 828, 836.

The scene immediately preceding the final exit of Pentheus alive, 912-76, before the fourth stasimon and the subsequent fifth scene with the messenger's narration of Pentheus' *sparagmos*, is one in which for the first time we might begin to feel pity for Pentheus. He is in the grip of that condition so very humanly recognizable, child-like and calamitously suggestible, one from which few mortals are completelyinvulnerable. The cruelty of the god and his exploitation of higher powers to accomplish his ends and turn human desire upon itself, is becoming pitifully clear. It is a most ironic passage full of pathos. We see the degeneration of a person whom we know to have had the potential for a certain agency. This is a king reduced to the most thoroughgoing servitude[268].

One may wish for the impossible, according to Aristotle, but it were silly, *ēlithios*, to deliberate on unrealizable ends, *ta adunata*[269]. To deliberate upon the impossible belongs to the "fool or madman", τις ἠλίθιος ἢ μαινόμενος. The realistic object of consideration is alone a proper object of deliberation and choice, *proairesis*, (not immutable things, not the eternal, *ta aidia*; not the natural cosmos; not self-evident facts such as mathematical axioms). Deliberation belongs only to the man who is in possession of mind, *nóos*, ὁ νοῦν ἔχων[270]. That is not what Pentheus is, by this stage. He weighs up impossible desires, as if they were realistic alternatives. His mind is dissipating and Dionysus approves, 943-8:

Di. ἐν δεξιᾶι χρὴ χἄμα δεξιῶι ποδὶ
αἴρειν νιν· αἰνῶ δ' ὅτι μεθέστηκας φρενῶν.
Pe. ἆρ' ἂν δυναίμην τὰς Κιθαιρῶνος πτυχὰς
αὐταῖσι βάκχαις τοῖς ἐμοῖς ὤμοις φέρειν;
Di. δύναι' ἄν, εἰ βούλοιο· τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας
οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ' ἔχεις οἵας σε δεῖ.

Di. You must hold it in your right hand and at the same time
hold up your right foot; I do praise you for changing your mind.
Pe. Could I bear on my shoulders the clefts of Cithaeron
with the bacchants themselves?
Di You could do it, if you wished; you had a mind before
that was not healthy, now you have the kind you ought to.

[268] He failed to take the opportunity of a healthy service to the god's will, such as he is enjoined to by Teiresias at, 366: τῶι Βακχίωι γὰρ τῶι Διὸς δουλευτέον. See also §3.3.3, § 3.3.5, § 4.3.8.

[269] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111b 23, 1112a 20.

[270] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1112a 18-21: Βουλεύονται δὲ πότερον περὶ πάντων, καὶ πᾶν βουλευτόν ἐστιν, ἢ περὶ ἐνίων οὐκ ἔστι βουλή; λεκτέον δ' ἴσως βουλευτὸν οὐχ ὑπὲρ οὗ βουλεύσαιτ' ἄν τις ἠλίθιος ἢ μαινόμενος, ἀλλ' ὑπὲρ ὧν ὁ νοῦν ἔχων. περὶ δὴ τῶν ἀιδίων οὐδεὶς βουλεύεται, οἷον περὶ τοῦ κόσμου ἢ τῆς διαμέτρου καὶ τῆς πλευρᾶς, ὅτι ἀσύμμετροι.

The consequences of Pentheus' volitional collapse are several. In every sense is he taken apart, driven out of himself, calamitously "externalized". In the rending and evisceration of his body and the driving of his mind out of "itself" we may see the same phenomenon, expressed in two aspects: the concrete and the abstract. The fragmentation of the mind and the decomposition of the structure of the will, is given the most vivid and literal figuration in Pentheus' fate at his mother's hands. He will leave the lives of others different, reconstituted as to what is and is not permissible to desire. The House of Kadmos will learn what it is to truly desire Dionysus, the consequences of not wishing for him or inauthentically wishing for him – carrying the thyrsus, being a *narthēkophoros*, but not becoming a true bacchant[271]. Pentheus had held together the house and had held in check the hybristic desires of others in the *polis*, for whom he was an object of fear, *tarbos*. While alive they would not have insulted the old Kadmos, precisely because of that awe of authority and terror of deserved punishment, which it has been Dionysus' desire to reclaim. Kadmos explains this in an apostrophe to the dead and broken king of very great pathos, 1308-12[272]:

> ὦι δῶμ' ἀνέβλεφ', ὃς συνεῖχες, ὦ τέκνον,
> τοὐμὸν μέλαθρον, παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς,
> πόλει τε τάρβος ἦσθα· τὸν γέροντα δὲ
> οὐδεὶς ὑβρίζειν ἤθελ' εἰσορῶν τὸ σὸν
> κάρα· δίκην γὰρ ἀξίαν ἐλάμβανες.
>
> Through whom the house has seen again, my child, you who held together,
> My house, born of my own daughter,
> You were the terror of the city, no one would be ready
> To insult the old man seeing your head, because you would have exacted due punishment.

Not wishing so to be, mortals become obstacles to the realization of divine desire, fighters against the gods. They have been, even if inadvertently, fighters against divinity, *theomachontes*[273]. In the court of the god's arbitration, ignorance is no exculpation, since

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[271] So ran the proverbial wisdom cited by Plato in the *Phaedo*, those who have *truly* loved *sophia* are no different from those true initiates, Pl. *Phd*. 69c 8 – d 2 [ὥς] φασιν οἱ περὶ τὰς τελετάς, "ναρθηκοφόροι μὲν πολλοί, βάκχοι δέ τε παῦροι·" οὗτοι δ' εἰσὶν κατὰ τὴν ἐμὴν δόξαν οὐκ ἄλλοι ἢ οἱ πεφιλοσοφηκότες ὀρθῶς.

[272] On apostrophe in *Bacchae* see § 6.1.2.

[273] *Theomachein*: from Dionysus' point of view 45, Teiresias' 325, the Stranger's 635-6, Agauē 1255, against which is contrasted the good fortune of possessing Dionysus as ally, *symmachos* 1343, spoken by Dionysus as his final revealed self. See also Kamerbeek, 1948 "On the conception of *theomachos* and in relation with Greek Tragedy". Note that the substantive *theomachos* is never used in *Bacchae*. While persons may commit acts of *theomachein*, it is not a simple matter of therefore being able to *identify* them as *theomachos*. Perhaps their acts

knowledge is just what he has offered. Ignorance is no mitigation. If they had desired otherwise, the opposite outcome would have prevailed; they would have a god for an ally, *symmachos*. In the end, as at the beginning, it has been a question of what and how figures desire. Knowing and wishing are terminally entangled with each another, 1340-1343[274].

Dionysus' desire itself has the one-dimensionality, the unreflectedness, which it has been implied, is so perilous for humans. He has had, from the outset and long before the action of the play and its encounters, an objective, *telos*, one long ago assented to by Zeus, who like those Tyrrhenian pirates of *Hymn. Hom.* 7 had only to nod to be understood. Schemers, theirs is the mutuality of readily intelligible ends[275]. This is not a god or a religion of mercy. The god of Christianity, a brother and friend who brings his believers to their "father", with whom the believer will over the course of history develop an *individual* relationship, will not arrive for another 400 years even if, in the thematization of personhood inherent in Dionysus as I argue, we may suppose that we discern a kind of typology[276]. It is never too late to implore mercy, to seek compassion, to want union or redemption from the Christian god and his gentle intermediating son. To truly want it is already the beginning of, and certainly the necessary condition for, absolution. Desire the right relation in authenticity and sincerity and one is thereby free. As St. Augustine famously put it *Dilige et quod vis fac*[277], "Only love, then do whatsoever you want". He could say as much because "love" like *timē* before it, means a right or desirable relation, the bearing to self and other of healthy willing. Deeply implicit in it is the recognition of *value* or what Christians will come to call *truth*. A crucial difference between Jesus of Nazareth and Dionysus of Thebes is that while Christ is the Son of God who promises redemption of what has already been lost, Greek Tragedy reveals the transformation of knowledge and desires as something that occurs *too late*. Christ suffers for human sinners, Dionysus refuses to suffer human folly. It is too late by the end, for Kadmos to ask Dionysus for mercy[278]. It is too late that Pentheus realizes how near he has been to falsehood and evil – κακοῦ γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὢν ἐμάνθανεν, 1113 – and too late to make his enchanted mother recognize her own son – ὥς νιν γνωρίσασα μὴ κτάνοι, 1116.

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have been *theomachontes* but it is unclear if one can be designated unambiguously as such when everything has been so inadvertent. This problem of acts and their relation to *ēthos* is unresolved in Aristotle and will become increasingly important in our consideration of person and agency in *Bacchae*.

[274] See § 2.2.1.1 p. 57 for text and translation.

[275] πάλαι τάδε Ζεὺς οὑμὸς ἐπένευσεν πατήρ. 1349.

[276] There is a long history, of course, of such typology. We may see the *Christus Patiens* as a kind of Midrash on Dionysus/Christ. A scholar like Girard wanted to trace a scape-goat pattern by which godhood tself could be accounted for and which he applied to Dionysus. Henrichs' essay is one of the best treatments on the modern reception, one that still bears many of the lineaments of Christian doctrine and emotion, Henrichs, 1984 "Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The Modern View of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard", but see also his chapter in *Masks*: 13-43.

[277] August. *In Evang. Iohann.* VII, on 1 John IV. 4-12.

[278] 1344-5, see p. 114 for translation.

As far as Dionysus is concerned the opportunity for the assessment of their predicament has passed. Mortals ought to have nurtured within themselves, in their minds, *phrenes*, the proper affect. Out of the healthy emotion would have issued, without any need for reflection, the due bearing or orientation. It is too late for Thebes. Kadmos understands now; he confesses that "we have done wrong", *ēdikēkamen*, 1344. Yet he did not know; they "did not understand, when you ought to have known". Even that fact – for this is a play not simply about knowledge but about the knowledge of knowledge, as it is not simply about choices but about the situation of choice – that they did not comprehend or recognize when they ought to have, they now understand, *egnōkamen taut'*, 1346. Yet excess now lies with the god's reaction, 1344-8:

> Ka. Διόνυσε, λισσόμεσθά σ', ἠδικήκαμεν.
> Di. ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἤιδετε.
> Ka. ἐγνώκαμεν ταῦτ'· ἀλλ' ἐπεξέρχηι λίαν.
> Di. καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμῶν θεὸς γεγὼς ὑβριζόμην.
> Ka. ὀργὰς πρέπει θεοὺς οὐχ ὁμοιοῦσθαι βροτοῖς.
>
> Ka. Dionysus, we beseech you, we have done wrong.
> Di. You have learnt us late, but when you ought you did not know.
> Ka. We have realized this, but you excessively prosecute us.
> Di. Yes, because I, a god, have been insulted by you.
> Ka. It is not suitable for gods to be like mortals in anger.

This sensitivity to his identity and status is the *idée fixe* of Dionysus. He is *autistically* immoveable on this point[279]. As Pentheus before had found so unbearable the idea of his being insulted, violated as to his identity, so too has Dionysus, from beginning to end[280]. Dionysus "prosecutes" *epexerchēi* ("proceeds against", "goes against", "accomplishes his goal") excessively, *lian*. He is not subject to that command to mortals of his half-brother,

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[279] On this technical sense in which I use *autistic*, see Tomasello, 1999: 76-7 and Baron-Cohen, 1997. The *competent* social actor reflexively apprehends social others as subjects like himself, having a like mind, outlook and intelligible responses to events and situations.

[280] *Hubrizein*: Pentheus: 246-7: ταῦτ' οὐχὶ δεινὰ κἀγχόνης ἔστ' ἄξια, / ὕβρεις ὑβρίζειν, ὅστις ἔστιν ὁ ξένος; 778-9, Dionysus, has even come to Thebes first, of all Greek cities, because of an original *hubris* that precedes the beginning of *Bacchae*: 9: ἀθάνατον Ἥρας μητέρ' εἰς ἐμὴν ὕβριν. 516-18: ἀτάρ τοι τῶνδ' ἄποιν' ὑβρισμάτων/ μέτεισι Διόνυσός σ', ὃν οὐκ εἶναι λέγεις·/ ἡμᾶς γὰρ ἀδικῶν κεῖνον ἐς δεσμοὺς ἄγεις. And he in turn "grievously outrages" Pentheus 616: ταῦτα καὶ καθύβρισ' αὐτόν. Kadmos comes to understand the calamity through the frame of *hybris*: ὕβριν <γ'> ὑβρισθείς· θεὸν γὰρ οὐχ ἡγεῖσθέ νιν. 1297, and implies a certain fear of suffering it himself in future, with no male offspring to guard his honour, as we saw above 1308-12. Hybris is on the "mind" of the chorus too, who at 113 uses the term in a surprising way: ἀμφὶ δὲ νάρθηκας ὑβριστὰς, see also 375, 55.

Apollo, to do nothing in excess, *ouden lian*[281]. The gods have a very human anxiety concerning the *hubris* of mortals, but unlike humans they do not tend to feel the need to take the measure of things. They are not concerned with the import of situations other than from the perspective of the realization of their prior desires and objectives[282].

It belongs to gods to accomplish their objectives, to feel wrath and translate anger effectively into strategies for revenge. Strategizing is not equivalent to evaluative counsel-taking. The gods do not generally deliberate on the moral value or ethics of their decisions, but only, if at all, on their practical realization. It is for mortals to ponder over meaning and value, *enthumeisthai* and to deliberate, *bouleuein*, out of a sense of the import of their different choices. This is both a liability of humans, a feature of their existential situation – mortal, limited in their knowledge and access to a wider perspective, living on a plain amongst troublesome, vexingly attractive or repulsive fellows – and ultimately what distinguishes them positively with regard to the gods. Mortals have the invaluable potential to consider and change themselves ethically. They lay to heart, they reconsider, revise, look again at their situation and themselves. They can learn and change and come to a deeper kind of existence and a deeper sense of the depth and nature of the subjectivity of others. They can learn compassion, which Dionysus, in his moral shallowness, cannot, for all his other mysterious and attractive qualities.

Mathos, "learning", is something we are made to associate with mortals[283]. It is what they actively do with *pathos*, experience. It is a kind of agency of the mind and heart, by which they come to know or understand that this itself – judgement, comprehension, interpretation, evaluation – is their unique and complex "agentfulness". When Kadmos

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[281] See also Kadmos' remarks on the excessiveness of Dionysus' punishment at 1248-50: οἴμοι κακῶν μὲν πρῶτα σῶν, ἔπειτ' ἐμῶν·/ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἡμᾶς ἐνδίκως μὲν ἀλλ' ἄγαν/ Βρόμιος ἄναξ ἀπώλεσ' οἰκεῖος γεγώς. By the end, the bacchants feel Pentheus and Kadmos have got what they deserve, 1327-8: τὸ μὲν σὸν ἀλγῶ, Κάδμε· σὸς δ' ἔχει δίκην/ παῖς παιδὸς ἀξίαν μέν, ἀλγεινὴν δὲ σοί. Seaford sees Kadmos as an innocent bystander in these events, made to suffer for Pentheus' error, Seaford on 1327-8: "Kadmos' is a *private* grief. He is the innocent victim of contempt for the deity, like Phaidra in *Hipp*.", as I am trying to show, it is ethically more complicated than that.

[282] Tellingly, the opposite of *epexerchesthai*, "prosecute a plan or action", "punish", "take revenge", "attack", "accomplish an aim" or most concretely "come upon", (all of which Dionysus, *der kommende Gott* of Hölderlin and Otto, does in *Bacchae*) is considered at the end of the 5th Century to be expressed by *enthumeisthai*, "to lay to heart", "to ponder", "to think deeply", "to feel profound concern". And this in Thucydides a writer himself much concerned with men as agents who wrong and feel wronged, who are motivated and seek to affect the motivations of others, who deliberate on their objectives and act on deliberation, who recognize danger and impute agency. On the laying of plans, the confidence in or excitement in their consideration, and the difference of "having in one's heart" and "execution", see for example Thuc. 1.20. 5.4-6: ἐνθυμεῖται γὰρ οὐδεὶς ὁμοῖα τῇ πίστει καὶ ἔργῳ ἐπεξέρχεται, ἀλλὰ μετ' ἀσφαλείας μὲν δοξάζομεν, μετὰ δέους δὲ ἐν τῷ ἔργῳ ἐλλείπομεν.

[283] *Mathos*: δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει 39, δόξει τις ἀμαθεῖ σοφὰ λέγων οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν. 480, σὲ δ' ἀμαθίας γε κἀσεβοῦντ' ἐς τὸν θεόν. 490. Figures are exhorted "learn!", μάθε, by others, 657, 1281. When a subject is discussing its own lesson learnt, it is too late already: κακοῦ γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὢν ἐμάνθανεν. 1113, Διόνυσος ἡμᾶς ὤλεσ', ἄρτι μανθάνω. 1296. In Aeschylus first we find the opposition *pathos-mathos* suggested, Aesch. *Ag*. 176-8: τὸν φρονεῖν βροτοὺς ὁδώ- /σαντα, τὸν <πάθει μάθος>/θέντα κυρίως ἔχειν.

admonishes Dionysus that it is unfitting for gods to resemble mortals in regard to their *orgai*, their *thumoi*, he is expressing this essential point. Dionysus, who has come resembling a mortal man so closely that he has taken on not only the outward form of a mortal human, but even "a man's nature"[284], does indeed "show" himself also inadvertently[285] He shows us spectating mortals what the nature of gods is and what sufficient condition of humanity or personhood may be missing in gods when they come resembling humans too closely. By this dramatic articulation, in the spectre of the moral insufficiency of an *allzumenschliche* divine power and his *thumos*, in the *orgē* of the god who imports his *orgia*[286], the audience will be induced to revise or deepen its understanding of what constitutes or could ideally constitute a *human* person[287].

[οἵαν οἵαν ὀργὰν]: "What seething, what fuming", or "What rage, what rage", as Dodds put it, sings the chorus of Pentheus[288]. Yet, "temper", "mood", "emotional constitution", "propensity", as well as more specifically "wrath", could be said of what he "manifests", *anaphainei* 538[289]. The god, born of Zeus the Sky-God's lightning strike, reveals himself and his *orgia*, teaches what it means to be unprepared, *ateleston*, "uninitiated", into his "bacchic acts", *baccheumata*, 39. The "earth-born", "inhuman", "reptilian" Pentheus (χθόνιον

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[284] μορφὴν δ' ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν 4, ὧν οὕνεκ' εἶδος θνητὸν ἀλλάξας ἔχω/μορφήν τ' ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν. 53-4.

[285] ἵν' εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς 22, φανέντα θνητοῖς 42, ἐνδείξομαι 46, δεικνὺς ἐμαυτόν 50. Compare also the repeated and positive valorization of the visible, that which is manifest *ta phanera*: 992, 1006, 1011, 1199, which of course, as we have seen, Dionysus, who stands face-to-face with him, is not to Pentheus οὐ γὰρ φανερὸς ὄμμασίν γ' ἐμοῖς 501.

[286] And whose followers gambol and course through the meadows, *orgadas* (340, 455). *Orgia*: 34, 51, 79, 262, 416, 470, 471, 476, 482, 998, 1080. The *orgia* are the "works" of Dionysus and his followers, amongst the ends, *telē*, of which are his *teletai*, "consummations", the affective, psychological, spiritual or religious sublimated purposes. *Orgia* is a different mode of "accomplishment", a kind of "work" set aside and sacred, outside of the banausic and banal economy of exchange and labour which is an insufficient, if necessary, organization of human social relations. The term *orgia* is itself a fusion, an example of the integration and transformative power and effect that belongs to Dionysus. On the, I certainly think, deliberate interplay of *orgia* and *orgadas*, see also Chantraine on ὄργια and Rijk. on ἐν ὀργάσιν 340, where we hear of that luckless Actaeon, cousin of Pentheus, the bad judge of his mortal situation, who had boasted that he was greater in the hunt than Artemis "in the meadows": "Probably an ominous term, for it may be meant to evoke an association with ὄργια. Compare Chantraine *s.v.* ὄργια, *fin.*: ' . . . il faut indiquer que par étymologie populaire, lorsqu'il s'agissait notamment de Dionysos, ces mots (viz. ὄργια etc. – AR) ont pu être associé à οργή'. Ὀργή, in turn, is at the base of ὀργάς, 'terre grasse, humide et fertile'. Just as Actaeon was punished for his misbehaviour ἐν ὀργάσιν, so Pentheus will be punished for his misbehaviour ἐν ὀργίοις."
Erg- (work, intentional and object-pursuing action) is contrasted with *org-* (natural or spontaneous actions that do not require and often hinder purpose) in this thematic interplay in the work of affect and effect. *Erg-*: σκοτίαισι κρυπτὸν εἱρκταῖς 549, σκοτεινὰς ὁρκανὰς 611, καὶ λογχοποιῶν ὄργανα κτᾶσθαι μάτην; 1208. *Org-* 537, 641, 647, 758, 997.

[287] Greek gods are not always and absolutely merciless. See, for example, the 'pity and regret' they feel seeing the corpse of Hector outraged by Achilles at Hom. *Il.*24.23-4.

[288]537 [οἵαν οἵαν ὀργὰν]: deleted by Bothe and Hermann, citing a notation in L "*perisson*" i.e., 'superfluous' , though as he also points out the verse "a nullo critico in suspicionem adductum", Hermann *ad* loc. Almost all commentators do retain this line, [Diggle, Kopff, Grégoire & Meunier], Grégoire & Meunier note the lacuna in the manuscript in the corresponding position at the beginning of the preceding strophe, i.e. before 519: ante hunc u. lacunam susp. Canter.

[289] *Anaphainei* cf. ἀναφαίνω σε τόδ', ὦ Βάκ-/χιε, Θήβαις ὀνομάζειν. 528-9, †ὦναξ Βρόμιε, θεὸς φαίνηι μέγας., 1031. Pentheus wonders, in a language that we must see as typically loaded, how Dionysus "appears in front my house, having got out" πῶς προνώπιος/ φαίνηι πρὸς οἴκοις τοῖς ἐμοῖς, ἔξω βεβώς; 645-6.

γένος ἐκφύς γε δράκοντός . . . χθόνιος, / ἀγριωπὸν τέρας, οὐ φῶτα βρότειον, 538-42) reveals only his *orgē*, his natural impulse; and in so doing, like Dionysus, is also revealing what he is and what he is not, what he has to excess and in what he is deficient. A certain desirousness is in mortality. It is inside mortals and always coming out as breath itself. In detecting breath, *anima*, (since it is the necessary condition and therefore index of life) we say that beings are *animate*. Mortals are things that swell and dwindle, like plants. Their expansion and contraction, their budding and fading is out of their control, a process in which they are at best only participants. It is impossible to be always awake, always sober, (Socrates comes nearest that) or always aroused like the satyr, whose *ithyphallia* is the mark of an interminable tumescence of will and appetite denied to normal, time-bound mortals with their rhythmic bodily existences and cyclic fortunes.

Mortal life is distinguished for its temporal character, its rhythmic shape[290], its termination in unforeseeable and ineluctable death[291] (its being insusceptible to becoming "bent" to human intentions, *agnamptos*[292]). Euripides turns the famous encounter between Dionysus and the resisting man into a remarkably rich and wide-ranging experiment in articulating the quality and import to human beings – these breathing, dying, thinking and unthinking, raging and sleeping, purposive and inadvertent beings – of their desires, choices and the ends of their lives.

2.6 Judgement: *sun mainomenai doxai*[293]

For reasons similar to those given for the non-identity of *proairesis* and *boulēsis,* choice cannot be said to be the same thing as opinion, *doxa*[294]. *Doxa* can be of anything at all, including the "eternal, the impossible, and things in our power", περὶ τὰ ἀίδια καὶ τὰ ἀδύνατα ἢ τὰ ἐφ' ἡμῖν. The criteria by which we evaluate *proairesis* are ethical, good or bad, while we distinguish *doxa* as "true or false"[295]. The relationship of *doxa* to *proairesis* is complicated. Aristotle does not deal with the point with anything like the sophistication of the Tragic poets. In the interests of his analytical, classificatory objectives, Aristotle divides opinion

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[290] *Hoios rusmos*: Archilochus fr. 128. 6-7: ἀλλὰ χαρτοῖσίν τε χαῖρε καὶ κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα/ μὴ λίην, γίνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει. "In your rejoicing let your joy, in hardship your despairs/ be tempered: understand the pattern [*rusmos*] shaping men's affairs.", [trans. West, 1993].

[291] Ephemerality of life's fortunes: Eur. *Her.* 866, *Phoen.* 558, Pind. *Pyth.* 8.95. Unforeseeable death: *Aesch. PV* 248-50.

[292] See Snell's comments on Tragic 'flexibility' and inflexibility, *epignamptein*, Snell, 1928: 20-1, in his influential discussion of agency in Aeschylus, also § 3.2.2 p. 106 n. 68.

[293] 887.

[294] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1111 b 31 – 1112 a 13.

[295] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111 b 33-5.

neatly from choice. It is not his mandate to establish whether "opinion precedes or accompanies choice". They are, critically for him, simply "not identical"[296]. To the reader of Tragedy, however, the recursive or dialectical relationship between what one thinks is the case on the one hand, and how and what one chooses on the other, must be manifest. In the abstract, knowledge is separable from values, perhaps, but in the particular cases which Tragedy dramatizes, it is not so. Certainly in *Bacchae*, there is an entanglement of the epistemic and the ethical, of knowledge and values, which illuminate, or adumbrate each other, in a very complex manner.

Doxa, "judgement" or "opinion" is infected from the beginning in *Bacchae* or so at least the expert on the gods and on signs, Teiresias alleges[297]. Discerning reality and evaluating circumstances is the central problem here. The tragic consequences of the situation will issue from the faculties of mortals, impaired to perceive and therefore also to judge, 309-13:

> ἀλλ' ἐμοί, Πενθεῦ, πιθοῦ·
> μὴ τὸ κράτος αὔχει δύναμιν ἀνθρώποις ἔχειν,
> μηδ', ἢν δοκῇς μέν, ἡ δὲ δόξα σου νοσῇ,
> φρονεῖν δόκει τι· τὸν θεὸν δ' ἐς γῆν δέχου
> καὶ σπένδε καὶ βάκχευε καὶ στέφου κάρα.[298]
>
> But believe me, Pentheus,
> Do not boast that it is their agency which has the power amongst humans,
> Nor, even if you deem so, for your deeming is ill,
> Deem that you are actually thinking anything. Receive the god into the country
> And pour offering and become a bacchant and dress your head.

This same idea is picked up again in near identical words by Dionysus: persons fail to judge their own impairments, when that impairment is precisely the all-important capacity for judgement itself: "To an ignorant man, one will seem to speak no good sense when speaking wisely" 480[299]. Pentheus is a man who cannot discern appearance and reality[300]; he *is* as Teiresias has diagnosed him, diseased in his judgements, thinking that he thinks when he

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[296] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1112a 11-13: εἰ δὲ προγίνεται δόξα τῆς προαιρέσεως ἢ παρακολουθεῖ, οὐδὲν διαφέρει· οὐ τοῦτο γὰρ σκοποῦμεν, ἀλλ' εἰ ταὐτόνἐστι δόξῃ τινί.

[297] 326-7, see also § 3.3.6 p. 188.

[298] Pentheus has his chance to be "cured", not having taken it will have been his culpability, cf. Arist. Eth. Nich. 1114a.14-19: οὐδὲ γὰρ ὁ νοσῶν ὑγιής. καὶ εἰ οὕτως ἔτυχεν, ἑκὼν νοσεῖ, ἀκρατῶς βιοτεύων καὶ ἀπειθῶν τοῖς ἰατροῖς. τότε μὲν οὖν ἐξῆν αὐτῷ μὴ νοσεῖν, προεμένῳ δ' οὐκέτι, ὥσπερ οὐδ' ἀφέντι λίθον ἔτ' αὐτὸν δυνατὸν ἀναλαβεῖν· ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐπ' αὐτῷ τὸ βαλεῖν [καὶ ῥῖψαι]· ἡ γὰρ ἀρχὴ ἐν αὐτῷ.

[299] See 24 above.

[300] Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1114 a 31- b 15.

does not. Thus in that palace scene recounted by the Stranger, Pentheus seems to himself, judges himself, to be doing things he is not; he grasps at the immaterial, he is fed on imagined things, "hopes", "expectations", *elpides* 616-7.

The flame on Semelē's tomb flares up[301]. Pentheus has been a man of prejudices[302], now whatever judgement he was capable of, at least momentarily he has lost. He thinks the surely divine, certainly prodigious sign a practical problem that must be solved, ὁ δ' ὡς ἐσεῖδε, δώματ' αἴθεσθαι δοκῶν, 624. The inefficacy of Pentheus is explained by the brokenness of his faculty of adjudication, *doxa*. In a small detail, we feel a masterful emphasis through irony, on the thematic priority of judgement and seeming: Pentheus has failed to see the personhood inside of persons, and failed to see Dionysus, but he sees *phasmata*, shining hallucinations, which he takes for a person, mistaking it for Stranger[303]. The illusion was Dionysus, says the Stranger, "or so it seems to me, I say my opinion, *doxa*", 628-9[304].

Dokein is a common verb in Greek; it means, "suppose", "think", "expect", "imagine", "be of an opinion", "to think right, to think a good idea". It is the verbal form then, of the substantive *doxa* "opinion", "judgement". It is derived from the verb *dechesthai* "receive", "take" – apprehension precedes comprehension. It takes the form also of *dokeuein* "observe", "watch", "regard closely", one of the many threads in a complex and persistent connection in Greek of sight and perception with the internal "digestion" or processing of objects of perception and sight, that is cognition, comprehension and judgement[305]. The doctrines that mortals have and hold, that they have received from their parents and ancestors, these are the *patrioi paradochai*, which Pentheus is vainly adjured to receive by the seer[306]. Pentheus

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[301] The tomb is memorial trace, *mnēma*, an index of presence, of past and present agency. Index: on the interpretation of this "still living flame" 8, token of "undying hybris"9, see § 5.3.3. On rememberance and forgetting in *Bacchae*, see Mazzaro, 1993.

[302] He "interprets", judges or sees Dionysus when he first meets him, exactly as he had before he had ever set eyes on him, cf. 233-8 and 453-9.

[303] 624-30.

[304] 629-30: κἄιθ' ὁ Βρόμιος, ὡς ἔμοιγε φαίνεται, δόξαν λέγω,/ φάσμ' ἐποίησεν κατ' αὐλήν·

[305] At 977-91 the bacchant chorus anticipate the events of Pentheus' detection and destruction. The raving maenads are not humans but "rushing dogs of *Lyssa* [fury]", they are beings of pure impulse and instigation, the very picture of the falling away of the capacity for judgement. They detect the spy *kataskopon*, who himself is really "mad", *lussōdē*. The *matēr*, mother 982, "will see", 983, the *mastēr*, seeker or searcher, 985. He is looking upon the maenads, *dokeuonta* 984. The peeping, injudicious son of an injudicious, to prejudicious son, will be judged not a human person; the mother will ask who bore it, this creature not of human blood. Like Semelē who was adjudged to have slept with "some man" or the foreign god "some Zeus who gives birth to new gods" or Dionysus, taken simply for "some foreigner", Pentheus is thing "born of some lion or Libyan Gorgons" 987-991: τίς ἄρα νιν ἔτεκεν;/ οὐ γὰρ ἐξ αἵματος/ γυναικῶν ἔφυ, λεαίνας δέ τινος/ ὅδ' ἢ Γοργόνων Λιβυσσᾶν γένος.

[306] πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνωι/κεκτήμεθ', 201-2. Apprehend, receive: τὸν θεὸν δ' ἐς γῆν δέχου 312, τὸν δαίμον' οὖν τόνδ', ὅστις ἔστ', ὦ δέσποτα, δέχου πόλει τῆιδ' 770-1. The chorus are those who take in and affirm their receptiveness: τὸ πλῆθος ὅτι τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-/ταί τε, τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν. 430-1, Πενθέως Ἀγαυὴν μητέρ'… δέχεσθ' ἐς κῶμον εὐίου θεοῦ. 1166-7.

wants to apprehend the bacchants and he wants to see things for himself, to not have them passed on by messengers, priests, tradition or the wisdom of the "common folk", 430-1.

Doxa is in a sense that which one chooses, for it is that which one has judged right to accept as corresponding to reality. What is ajudged sound by the various figures in *Bacchae* is at odds, and often when the idea of *dokein* surfaces, it is a signal of the unsoundness of human judgement. Thus at 311-2, the point is made with a triple repetition of the root, that Pentheus is not capable of judgement. That "citified, glib talker"[307], who convinces the shepherds to try to catch Agauē and collect a reward from the king[308], misidentifies the nature of what he spies and his avarice nearly gets them savagely killed[309]. He is a character on the model of the Etruscan pirates and all those who take too utilitarian a reading of things in Dionysus' proximity. His uncomprehending reading of the situation is a misjudgement, which is accepted by his fellows[310], with nearly calamitous consequences[311]. The logic of the opportunist and the determining character of judgements, taken and received, play out here in the second episode in a kind of rehearsal of the play's climax. Motivation, inference and the nature and quality of judgements are given the fundamental and determining place they indeed have in the existence of persons.

In a famous and much discussed passage of the fourth episode, Pentheus is seen vanquished in his capacity to control his desire, to apprehend reality and therefore to judge what he apprehends. This is a wavering consciousness, seeing aspects of reality but incapable of discrimination, hitting on the truth of appearances only involuntarily, 918-22[312]:

καὶ μὴν ὁρᾶν μοι δύο μὲν ἡλίους δοκῶ,
δισσὰς δὲ Θήβας καὶ πόλισμ' ἑπτάστομον·
καὶ ταῦρος ἡμῖν πρόσθεν ἡγεῖσθαι δοκεῖς
καὶ σῶι κέρατα κρατὶ προσπεφυκέναι.

[307] καί τις πλάνης κατ' ἄστυ καὶ τρίβων λόγων 717.

[308] 718-21.

[309] ἡμεῖς μὲν οὖν φεύγοντες ἐξηλύξαμεν/ βακχῶν σπαραγμόν 734-5.

[310] εὖ δ' ἡμῖν λέγειν/ ἔδοξε, θάμνων δ' ἐλλοχίζομεν φόβαις/ κρύψαντες αὐτούς. 721-3.

[311] The rending, *sparagmos*, which instead of the shepherds the cattle suffer, serves to prepare for the calamitous fate of Pentheus, 731-47.

[312] Seaford's comments on these lines are extensive, see also Seaford, 1987. His conjecture that a mirror, implement of initatory rites, although not mentioned in the text was plausibly being used on stage in this scene is intriguing. Dionysus' invisible mirrors is another study to itself. Thumiger, 2007: 114 n. 53 "Di Benedetto (2004) 138 notes how in the short passage at 918-58 Pentheus uses the verb δοκέω with reference to himself with striking frequency [5 times]: this does not underline self-reflexivity, but a naïve predisposition to accept any new perception without scrutiny. See also δοκεύω ('to look at closely', therefore 'to spy') applied by the chorus to Pentheus at 984." Thumiger is quite right about the lack of scrutiny here which is the dissipation of judgement, but that weakness of judgement is the consequence of his fatal lack of self-reflexivity.

ἀλλ' ἦ ποτ' ἦσθα θήρ; τεταύρωσαι γὰρ οὖν.

And yet, it seems to me I see two suns,
Two Thebes, two seven-gated towns;
And you seem to us a bull leading me forward
And to have sprouted horns on your head.
But were you perhaps a wild beast all along? For you *are* become bull.

Mortals seem to see what they are disposed to see. They see what they wish to. Now Pentheus has lost power over his own desires, he is registering things differently, entirely in line with the desires of the god.

In *Bacchae* we witness the extinction and deceiving of perception and conception and the invalidation of judgement. In a remarkable scene in the final episode, we also are shown the recovery of judgement. This will entail a recovery of sight, of self-awareness and simultaneously therefore of the capacity for inter-subjective awareness. Dismal Agauē and her fellow maenads have not known what kind of things they have done, *hoi' edrasate*, 1259. The plural may also helpfully hint at the schismatic being that stands before Kadmos: it is both Agauē, his daughter, and in some essential way, not *her*. She is still in the maenadic trance, unreflexive and ecstatic. If she stayed in this condition "to the end", *dia telous*, in which she is now "fixed", "established", she would judge herself neither lucky nor unlucky, οὐκ εὐτυχοῦσαι δόξετ' οὐχὶ δυστυχεῖν 1262. Maenadic self-ignorance is an extreme version of the universal human failure of self-understanding. Pentheus had earlier been told by Dionysus that his very name was the sign of his fate, but it is a sign and a hint that Pentheus does not know to interpret[313]. The maenadic state is a state of indiscrimination. Agauē cannot see for herself what is "not good" or "grievous"[314]. That she even asks the question is the sign of the onset of her gradual return to self, 1259-62:

Κα. φεῦ φεῦ· φρονήσασαι μὲν οἷ' ἐδράσατε
ἀλγήσετ' ἄλγος δεινόν· εἰ δὲ διὰ τέλους
ἐν τῶιδ' ἀεὶ μενεῖτ' ἐν ὧι καθέστατε,
οὐκ εὐτυχοῦσαι δόξετ' οὐχὶ δυστυχεῖν[315].

[313] ἐνδυστυχῆσαι τοὔνομ' ἐπιτήδειος εἶ. 508, see p. 13.

[314] τί δ' οὐ καλῶς τῶνδ' ἢ τί λυπηρῶς ἔχει; 1263.

[315] 1262: Dodds: "'Fortunate' I will not call you; but in your dream you will escape misfortune.' δόξετ', because *eutuchia* is an objective condition ('good fortune'), not a state of mind ('happiness'). For the thought cf. fr. 205, and Soph. *Aj.* 552 ff.". Dodds too easily glances over the complex relationship between 'objective condition' and 'state of mind', which is the flowing, dialectical charge, with which the play crackles. Di Benedetto on 1259-62: "Cadmo non si riferisce alla conoscenza in quanto percezione e organizzazione di dati; si tratta invece della consapevolezza della propria situatzione." Yet in *Bacchae* there is a continuous alignment of or demonstration of the

Ka. Ach, ach! When you know what you have done
A terrible pain will pain you, but if to the end
You remain forever in this condition in which you stand,
You will judge yourself neither lucky nor unlucky.

Dionysus, as ever, provides a heightening contrast with mortals. His clarity, inferences and judgements of situations and of signs, his gnosis and diagnosis, are privileged and validated. His focalizations have not the unreliability of human others'[316]. This is a necessary characteristic in a superhuman person whose mission has been to come in order that the human adversary, voluntarily or not, "will know" him: γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς/Διόνυσον, 859-60. Thus, we accept – judge his judgement – as true when he says, for example, that Pentheus stabbed at an apparition, *phasma*, 630, thinking it to be "me", δόξαν λέγω, "as I judge it" (i.e. to be what Pentheus was thinking or judging to be the case), 629[317]. And when he "thinks" that he hears the scrape of Pentheus' shoe approaching from inside, his expectation is verified when Pentheus in fact emerges, 638-9. His *doxa*, his inference, finds its verification in events.

Aristotle pursues the problem of the nature of *proairesis*, which is such a fundamental condition for the attribution of fullest personhood, as we shall argue in the following chapter. 'Is not *proairesis* deliberation, *bouleusis*?', he asks[318]:

indissociability of perception with consciousness, the data of a situation necessary for a judicious assessment of self and others; hence regaining consciousness of her situation necessarily entails, as a primary condition, regaining perceptual and organizational faculties; up to now she has been a figure of rolling and even spinning eyes [διαστρόφους/κόρας ἐλίσσουσ' 1122-3, ἐν διαστρόφοις/ ὄσσοις 1166-7]. Kadmos must reset her focus on external objects in order for her to come into clear focus as a subject to herself (λαμπρότερος ἢ πρὶν καὶ διειπετέστερος 1267); she has been, like her offspring, a fluttering, purposeless, randomly moving mind, (τὸ δὲ πτοηθὲν τόδ' ἔτι σῆι ψυχῆι, 1268, cf. on *eptoēsis* above § 2.2.4 n. 132), 1264-70. Benedetto continues, pointing out an analogous passage at E. *Or*. 396-8, but there is a more direct connection for him with Soph. *Ai*. 257-9 and 272: "Ma il dato più specifico dell'enunciazione di Cadmo è la distinzione (contrappositiva) tra consapevolezza in quanto promotrice di sofferenza e inconsapevolezza in quanto illusoria sensazione di assenza di infelicità.". I take the important point to be not so much the contradistinction of consciousness and unconsciousness, the states they promote. What is being expressed is the impossibilty of any kind of evaluation of situations, when one is in the depersonalized, automatic state in which Agauē is. She does not know herself at all. Seaford points to Oedipus before his self-discovery and Ar. *Ran*. 1182-6.

[316] Yet not everything he threatens comes to pass, exactly as Dionysus predicts in the prologue, see Thumiger, 2007: 182-3 fft. 76 & 77.

[317] *Doxa*: "judgement" or "opinion", contrasted with *epistēmē*, see Dodds on 629; cf. Eur *IT* 1164; and see on *epistēmē* Snell, 1928: 2 ff. and Snell, 1922.

[318] Thought is *intentional*, by its very nature as an operation of the discernment or construal of things, which are not identical with itself. The objects of desire and of forethought are necessarily ahead of the subject or in the subject's future.

> ἑκούσιον μὲν δὴ φαίνεται, τὸ δ' ἑκούσιον οὐ πᾶν προαιρετόν. ἀλλ' ἆρά γε τὸ προβεβουλευμένον; ἡ γὰρ προαίρεσις μετὰ λόγου καὶ διανοίας. ὑποσημαίνειν δ' ἔοικε καὶ τοὔνομα ὡς ὂν πρὸ ἑτέρων αἱρετόν.[319]
>
> It seems to be voluntary, but not all that is voluntary to be an object of choice. Is it, then, what has been decided by earlier deliberation? At any rate choice involves reason and thought. Even the name seems to suggest that it is what is chosen before other things.

Divine power does not rush into things, 882-4. We may suppose, as regular theatre-goers, and we find confirmed in *Bacchae*, that humans in their weakness are precipitate beings. It is hard for them to know what they should know and how to learn it. Divine strength, like divine perspective, is reliable, *piston* 883. Mortals, by their actions, effectively "honour ignorance" and accumulate the wrong kinds of gifts, instead of "increasing that which comes from the gods". Such mortals cannot judge aright; they are "raving in their judgement", *mainomenai doxai*. It is the strength of the gods, their force not their persuasion or teaching, that "sets aright mortals", *apeuthunei*, 882-7.

The god whose followers are "maenads", is the god who brings *mania*, this god of ambiguous bestowals, both so terrible and so gentle, 861. In his vicinity we learn about the different kinds of *mania* that Plato would famously differentiate as the unhealthy and that empowering kind, which brings a "power", "might", *menos*, issuing from the gods[320]. This is also the god who punishes mortals, precisely for their sickened minds, their broken judgements. Mortals are twice culpable with Dionysus: both for their acts and for the drunkenness, sickness or raving of their minds, which have been the cause or insufficient inhibitor of those acts.

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[319] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1112a 14-7.

[320] Pl. *Phdr.* 265.a.5-b.5. Μανίας δέ γε εἴδη δύο, τὴν μὲν ὑπὸ νοσημάτων ἀνθρωπίνων, τὴν δὲ ὑπὸ θείας ἐξαλλαγῆς τῶν εἰωθότων νομίμων γιγνομένην . . . Τῆς δὲ θείας τεττάρων θεῶν τέτταρα μέρη διελόμενοι, μαντικὴν μὲν ἐπίπνοιαν Ἀπόλλωνος θέντες, Διονύσου δὲ τελεστικήν, Μουσῶν δ' αὖ ποιητικήν, τετάρτην δὲ Ἀφροδίτης καὶ Ἔρωτος, ἐρωτικὴν μανίαν ἐφήσαμέν τε ἀρίστην εἶναι. See also Casadesús Bordoy, 2013 on "Dionysian Enthusiasm in Plato". See also § 4.2.3 p. 230 n. 49.

2.7 *Bouleusis*: Deliberation

τί βούλομαι γάρ;[321]

πάντας δ' ἐπαίνημι καὶ φιλέω,
ἑκὼν ὅστις ἔρδηι
μηδὲν αἰσχρόν· ἀνάγκαι
δ' οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.

So long as he does nothing shameful willingly, *hekōn*,
I give my praise and love to any man.
Not even the gods can fight necessity.[322]

ζητῶν πῶς πράξει, "inquiring how he is to act"[323], Bruno Snell's '*Ti drasō*'[324], is the stuff of dramatic situations. That is one way of framing the more profound inquiry 'what do I wish?'. Since desire is primary, since desire is ambiguous and only partially manifest in acts, 'what do I wish?' is the stronger line of questioning, if a subject is concerned not only with realizing goals but with the quality and import of different goals. It is the mark of humane reflexivity, a question the gods do not ever pose themselves. In the Dionysiac scenario, where figures do not ask themselves that question well enough, the question is rather, "Where shall I go, how shall I dance?" and "how shall I dissemble myself?"[325] In *Bacchae* the searching out how to act, the dislocation and unlocatedness of the *archē*, the primary motivation, is expressed powerfully through the character and deeds of Pentheus. It leads to the literal searching for the fragmented self which is no full person but shattered into a thousand scraps, *muriois zētēmasin*, 1218, "a thing not easy to locate", οὐ ῥάιδιον ζήτημα,

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[321] "What do I wish?", Eur. *IA* 485.

[322] Simonides 542. [=37.1.27-30 in *Poetae Melici Graeci*, Page {ed.}, 1962], for translation and discussion of this pertinent and variously interpreted poem see Beresford, 2008 (whose translation I borrow).

[323] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113 a.

[324] See Snell, 1928 and Rivier, 1968 on the divergently interpreted significance of the question posed by the tragic protagonist, "What shall I do?" *Ti drasō*?. For the present author, Menelaus' τί βούλομαι γάρ; "What do I want?", is the more poignantly tragic question. "What shall I do?" is often the recognition that there is not much to be done. "What do I want", is an agent's question, the voice of a person surveying itself and not just circumstances that have fallen together, see also below § 3.3.8 n. 252.

[325] So Kadmos asks Teiresias the expert (*sophos*) in the first episode, after the high religious emotion of the bacchant dancers' *parodos* (where the only question was "who is there?" 69-70), 184-6: ποῖ δεῖ χορεύειν, ποῖ καθιστάναι πόδα/ καὶ κρᾶτα σεῖσαι πολιόν; ἐξηγοῦ σύ μοι/ γέρων γέροντι, Τειρεσία· σὺ γὰρ σοφός. Pentheus, when once he has lost the capacity he failed to use to ask himself deeper questions, what he should do, also asks only how he should dance, 941-2: πότερα δὲ θύρσον δεξιᾶι λαβὼν χερὶ/ ἢ τῆιδε βάκχηι μᾶλλον εἰκασθήσομαι;

1139[326]. Pentheus is given many opportunities to revise himself, to look again at his situation, which would be to re-envisage his life and identity and that of the god. Before the laying on him of the light madness, 810-46, there is a final offer. Dionysus says that it is not too late to set things right. But Pentheus cannot learn, he cannot know in a manner different to the way he already knows and only assumes machination, a trick being devised against him, 800-5:

> Pe. ἀπόρωι γε τῶιδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένωι,
> ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται.
> Di. ὦ τᾶν, ἔτ' ἔστιν εὖ καταστῆσαι τάδε.
> Pe. τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἐμαῖς;
> Di. ἐγὼ γυναῖκας δεῦρ' ὅπλων ἄξω δίχα.
> Pe. οἴμοι· τόδ' ἤδη δόλιον ἐς ἐμὲ μηχανᾶι.
>
> Pe. We are entangled with this impossible stranger,
> Who will not be still, neither acted upon nor acting.
> Di. Good man, it is still well possible to arrange things.
> Pe. Doing what? Becoming a slave to my own slaves?
> Di. I shall bring the women here with no weapons.
> Pe. Oho, now this is a trick you are devising against me.

How a man is to act, "*this* is what is chosen", τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ προαιρούμενον, says Aristotle, and choice is defined through deliberation, *bouleusis*.

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[326] See § 5.1 and cf. Goldhill, 1986: 285-6 "For as Pentheus' body, dismembered by the Dionysiac chorus, [Goldhill means the *thiasos* of 'maenadized' Theban women of all ages, not the chorus of foreign women who have accompanied the Stranger, which is distinct and thus must be told the news of the *sparagmos*, see 1029-35], which can only be collected in fragments, but never reconstituted to wholeness, so each person's attempts to comprehend the corpus of tragic texts – through the violence of reading, the selectvity of analysis – can never hope to attain the synthesis which can totally efface the signs of *sparagmos,* the *sparagmos* of signs.". This reads very much as belonging to the particular intellectual concerns of that time, perhaps not all would still accede to the notion of reading as 'violence'. Goldhill was more inclined to accent the 'play-within-a play' dimension of *Bacchae* than I, (see also Segal, 1997 [1982], Bierl, 1991). His chapter "Genre and Transgression", 244-64, is especially rich, see e.g. the remarks on *Bacchae* at Goldhill, 1986: 264, which anticipate many of my themes, "The interest in the relations between inward and outward signs and attitudes of behaviour, and how to read those signs; the awareness and questioning of the place of paradigms in behaviour and moral choice; the role of the past in the determination of the present; the role of representation and of self-image in culture; are all implicated in Euripides' self-reflexive drama." What is the meaning of the text in Goldhill is the mind, intentionality and agency of persons for me. Texts, in any case are interacted with like persons, meaning things, having depths and even an unconscious. The semiotic inclination of the time, by which Drama avails itself as a system of signs, something we 'read' (*Reading Greek Tragedy*), lays insufficient weight on the moral *content* of the work, cf. also Wiles, 1987 "Reading Greek Performance", in response to Goldhill's work. We should engage with a drama like *Bacchae* as we do with persons, whom we not only read, but whom we monitor constantly, expecting complex motivations within them that can even elude themselves. We have such organic, time-shaped relationships with works as we do with persons, who are not shaped by the binary relations of a semiotic grammar, but constituted through the recursive relationships they have with themselves and with us. So complete is our entanglement with person-like things and those object-like others we think of automatically as persons. See on non-semiotic strategies of interpretation, § 5.2 below.

> βουλευτὸν δὲ καὶ προαιρετὸν τὸ αὐτό, πλὴν ἀφωρισμένον ἤδη τὸ προαιρετόν· τὸ γὰρ ἐκ τῆς βουλῆς κριθὲν προαιρετόν ἐστιν. παύεται γὰρ ἕκαστος ζητῶν πῶς πράξει, ὅταν εἰς αὑτὸν ἀναγάγῃ τὴν ἀρχήν, καὶ αὑτοῦ εἰς τὸ ἡγούμενον· τοῦτο γὰρ τὸ προαιρούμενον. δῆλον δὲ τοῦτο καὶ ἐκ τῶν ἀρχαίων πολιτειῶν, ἃς Ὅμηρος ἐμιμεῖτο· οἱ γὰρ βασιλεῖς ἃ προείλοντο ἀνήγγελλον τῷ δήμῳ. ὄντος δὲ τοῦ προαιρετοῦ βουλευτοῦ ὀρεκτοῦ τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν, καὶ ἡ προαίρεσις ἂν εἴη βουλευτικὴ ὄρεξις τῶν ἐφ' ἡμῖν· ἐκ τοῦ βουλεύσασθαι γὰρ κρίναντες ὀρεγόμεθα κατὰ τὴν βούλευσιν.[327]
>
> The same thing is deliberated upon and chosen, except that the object of choice is already determinate, since it is that which has been decided upon as a result of deliberation that is the object of choice. For everyone ceases to inquire how he is to act when he has brought the moving principle back to himself and to the ruling part of himself; for this is what he chooses. This is plain from the ancient constitutions, which Homer represented, for the kings announced their choices to the people. The object of choice being one of the things in our own power, which is desired after deliberation, *choice will be deliberate desire of things within our own power; for when we have reached a judgement as a result of deliberation, we desire in accordance with our deliberation*.

The effacement of choice in *Bacchae*, though not of responsibility (*aitia* and *timē* have been only the more potently asserted and reaffirmed in their reality by the closing lines of the drama), will have been necessarily also the extinction of the power of deliberation. The maenadic Theban women, Pentheus' transformation: these present, *a contrario,* in extreme forms, what agency is. One of those necessary things is the asking of questions and the asking of the right questions. Elenchus entails a kind of forward motion, but *mania* in its negative instances as well as in the positive form of "inspiration", entails a cognitive breakdown. A more or less "light madness", it produces a whirling motion, a turning of the self without a pre-established (*proaireton*) *telos* towards which to move. Deliberating, *bouleusis*, is asking oneself about one's wishes, *boulēseis*. It is not simply perceiving or registering what one "is" and desires, but entails judgement, an active and agentful *determination* of what one is through the determination of what one has evaluated shall be one's moving principle, *archē*. Thebes has been wanton in its acceptance (Kadmos' strategic welcoming of the god) as in its rejection (Semelē's sisters and Pentheus' shallow and thoughtless refusal to accept, receive or believe)[328]. Too unreflectively and passively *voluntary*, Thebes has failed to wish for Dionysus or has done so with insufficient authenticity.

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[327] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113 a 2-12.

[328] On the "wanton" see § 3.2.2.

The presence and quality of desire for the god and the relations he brings have been the central problem. The Thebans have determined wrongly or failed to determine; they have failed to choose and failed every opportunity to deliberate rightly. Their punishment has been the loss of deliberative power and loss of choice. They have learnt too late what choice is, how healthy it is to suspend deliberation in order to learn what deliberation and choice would have been and how thereby they might have "brought back to themselves" the ruling part. That is to say that they have not learnt how to become the self-constituted agents of their own desires and choice.

The surrender of Pentheus' will to that of the foreign Stranger, (Dionysus' undetectedness illuminates, 'shows forth', *anaphainei*, the lack of discernment of human subjects), is somehow both uncanny and psychologically realistic. It is a process of only gradually subdued resistances to the suggestion and influence of another, superbly realized by the poet. It begins, one may argue, even before the attractive Stranger has ever said a word, "as a mortal"[329]. Even just before entering his palace to be transformed, Pentheus is on the threshold between the 'indoors' of his own will and the 'outdoors' of the Stranger's[330]. Strong emotion is like a possession. *Baccheuein* is regularly used to designate a being lost to those intense passions that undo a subject's ties to itself, to others – and to time, as a feeling of forward motion towards an open-ended future that can be construed as *telos*.

Pentheus thinks still that he has the capacity for preference, when under the effects of the "light madness", whose power lies precisely in its effacement of that reflexivity, which would enable him to recognize and evaluate what it is that he thinks he recognizes and evaluates. The two modalities of Dionysus seem like an open set of alternatives to him – of *pathos*, being the object, and of *praxis*, *drān*, being the subject[331]; of kingly action or servile submission to the *bouleumata*, "purposes, intentions, the express will". He does not know that he is lost to himself, that he has been penetrated by the will of another. All that has been required for that is the disguisement of will, the confusion of desire's origin, ownership and identity, 843b-46:

> Pe. ×–◡– ×> ἂν δοκῆι βουλεύσομαι.
> Di. ἔξεστι· πάντηι τό γ' ἐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς πάρα.

[329] From 434-60 Dionysus is onstage without speaking, although he is being closely examined already from 453. In the prologue, 1-63 he speaks as a god in human form, and again in his final apearance from 1330 onwards (there is text missing before this) he makes quite clear that he is speaking again in the mode of a god, "as himself", 1340-1.

[330] Earlier he had been warned not to stand "outdoors" of the *nomoi*, οἴκει μεθ' ἡμῶν, μὴ θύραζε τῶν νόμων 331.

[331] On their confrontation in human *drān*, the matter of *dramata* see Snell's influential essay opening Snell, 1928: 1-33.

Pe. στείχοιμ' ἄν· ἢ γὰρ ὅπλ' ἔχων πορεύσομαι
ἢ τοῖσι σοῖσι πείσομαι βουλεύμασιν.

Pe. ×–◡– ×> I shall take counsel what judgement seems better[332].
Di. That is possible. In every way am I here and disposed.
Pe. I think I will go in, either I am going to march out in arms
Or I shall obey your counsels.[333]

Anything is possible, *exesti,* and in every way does the god stand at the mortal's disposal. Dionysus' readiness, his amenability, τό γ' ἐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς[334], is a sinister reminder of the almost universal unreadiness that has marked mortals. His own amenability heightens the picture of human "unserviceableness". We find here what others have found in *Agamemnon*: man being led by Necessity, *anagkē*, to a terrible deed, which he comes not only to accept but even to desire and passionately undertake[335]. Soon Pentheus will lay himself completely at the Stranger's disposal: σοὶ γὰρ ἀνακείμεσθα δή, 934[336].

Inclinations, tendencies, passionate desires, lusts and appetites – *epithumia, thumos, orexis, boulēsis*[337] – these can remain unprocessed by language and the mind – *phrenes*, *nóos*[338] – and its contrastive, evaluative articulations[339]. These are *qualitatively* distinct from *proairesis*, which is anterior, reasoning and conscious and, essentially, *binds* agents to their acts. In *proairesis* acts are bound to actors by this cognitive thread, which is "decision" or "counsel". Inextricable from choice is, *per definitionem*, that pre-meditative, that fundamentally linguistic and mental activity, which the Greeks called *bouleusis*. *Bouleusis* is a linguistic and mental activity that can be either or both public and private (having a cognitive and political dimension), and it is everywhere in Greek poetry, for taking counsel with oneself and others is everywhere in human life.

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[332] 843: The manuscript is lacunose here. Grégoire & Meunier combine 843a and b [ἐλθόντ' ἐς οἴκους <–◡– ×–◡–. / ×–◡– ×> ἂν δοκῇι βουλεύσομαι.] and give both 842 and their 843 to Pentheus, translating "Tout, plutôt que prêter à rire à ces bacchantes! – Entrons donc au palais, et là, j'aviserai . . .". Seaford: "Unless this anakolouthon 'reflects P.'s wavering state of mind' (Dodds) we must emend". Seaford adopts Jackson's emendation, see Diggle's apparatus. Cf also Rijksbaron on ἂν δοκῇι 843 extensivley on the various grammatical issues and assorted proposed solutions offered by translators and commentators, the translation I offer here is much in line with that of Kirk and approved by Rijksbaron.

[333] 845-6: Dodds: "P. pretends to himself that his decision is postponed. But the Stranger knows that virtually it is already taken."

[334] Cf. 440.

[335] Lesky, 1966: 84.

[336] 934 *Anakeimetha*: Seaford ad loc. "depend: ἀνακεῖσθαι can also mean to be dedicated to a deity. P. here seems to assent unwittingly to be sacrificed (it was important that the sacrificial victim go willingly)". On sacrificial aspects of *Bacchae* see also Seidensticker, 1979.

[337] See also Arist. *de An.* 414b 2, 433a 13.

[338] See Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 51 "la partie désirante de l'âme (*tò óretikón*); de l'autre côté, l'intellect, le *noûs*, dans sa fonction pratique" Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1139 a 17-20.

[339] On contrastiveness see § 3.3.6.

It is worthwhile underlining the anterior, that is to say *temporally* determined character, of Aristotelian *proairesis*. There is something like a syntax in agency. Cognition has a fundamentally syntactic character, a temporal and causative syntax, which by its construal of itself and the objects of perception, it lends to everything it touches. This will prove a profoundly important feature for Tragic subjectivity and the somewhat cognitive theory of personhood being presented here. As we shall see, the obvious and often overlooked, minimal conditions of the typical conceptions of agency are: a consciousness of self as a being in time, having a past, anticipating a future and being in a present typically occupied with reflection and consideration of that anterior and posterior projection of the self. This is a fundamental element of agency that I wish to conceptualize here: human agency inheres in the human construal of the self (and others identically). That construal is temporal in nature and given to continuous reinstitution, *kathēsis*; arrangement, *kosmein*; and organization, *epitassein*. Thought is a perpetual rebinding of the self to its previous estate and its future "re-incarnation". Without this cognitive and temporal identity, this constituting by the mind of itself as a subject "stretched" over time, humans would indeed act merely *hekōn* and *akōn*, de plein gré or malgré soi, and never "choosingly" or deliberately.

Deliberation requires a consciousness of present self in relation to past self and future self (and the construal of a reality that also has a past, present and future). We may suspect that consciousness is not, as the term may imply, just the registering of the "fact" of self, but rather the *constituting of* self. This is because it is the constituting of self *qua* object, the object of consciousness. The self is, necessarily, the conception of the self. It becomes an object of attention, because it is constituted in the mind. Yet, it has not objectivity. It is quite unlike physical, concrete objects, which have persistence over time; those possess that quality, which Piaget called "object constancy", or what Strawson calls "object permanence"[340]. The human self is marked by what we might call "person impermanence". It has the virtual character of community, being constituted like a *thiasos* or *polis* or *oikos* of different voices, of relations and perspectives that necessarily shift in time. These are subject to rhythms of unity and disunity, unanimity and discord. The political level recapitulates the cognitive and pyschological. The self like the city needs to groom itself, gather its threads together. This binding action is its articulacy, a continuous, conscious and unconscious reconstituting and re-instituting of self as identical over time.

Without consciousness and deliberation, actors would experience events, even events that they would seem to have initiated, only weakly willingly and unwillingly. They would be

[340]See § 4.1 n. 20 on constancy and permanence in Piaget, 1937 and Strawson, 2009.

indistinguishable in a fundamental way from other animals. Their emotions would only *happen* to them, their passions seize them, as if from outside, for there would be no "inside". Existence would unfold as uninterrupted externality without the perspective which creates an apparent division between within and without. In the *Opferritual* humans do not discover some prior *Menschenähnlichkeit* in their animal victims but attribute to animals the defining human character, and that is agency. This is the product of consciousness and everything that consciousness does to desire: the manner in which it elevates it to choice. The deliberative faculty is a faculty of temporal constitution.

2.8 The Horizon of Articulacy

Once a new horizon of determination has been identified and articulated – Divine Will, Necessity, Mind, Disposition, Class, Race, Gender, History, Outer Space, Quantum Reality, Genes – it is soon perforated; ways are found to make it plastic and manipulable, the object of operative intentions. Mortals are transgressive. We might call this continually receding border 'the horizon of articulation'. Humans, and most paradigmatically, those Athenians so artfully described in counterpoint to the "stay-at-home" Spartans in Thucydides' I[341], are restless explorers. To them the constrainment of horizons represents a challenge that incites their curiosity. They feel an intolerance of anything like servitude or indenture to circumstances not in "their control", as Aristotle puts it. Whether in some final way they are or are not constrained, humans historically insist on acting like agents.

Although such themes as agency, volition, choice, judgement and deliberation are not typically what are discussed when *Bacchae* is studied, I have tried to show, through the optic of Aristotle on ethics, that these have an important place in the drama. Since Nietzschean modernism took hold of the moral imagination of scholars, it has been taken for granted that Dionysus and Euripides' play are beyond morality – *jenseits von Gut und Böse* – and ought not to be studied in terms of ethics. The premise I wish to defend is not that Dionysus is or is not good or wicked or that he does or does not move beyond good or evil. It is rather, quite simply, that to human persons, things do matter. They matter to the poet, they matter to his audience and they do to the protagonists in the play. The manner of their mattering is what is open and that acts should ultimately be most meaningful and lead to the most meaningful or valuable outcomes is what is at stake.

[341] Thuc. 1. 70-1.

We are induced neither to see Pentheus wholly one way nor Dionysus wholly another. We are led, I think indisputably, to the renewed knowledge or recognition of actors as agents, as persons who have desires and aversions and can act upon those in any number of ways. Persons are marked by constant talk, not least in drama. Talk is the perpetual re-articulation of predicament. Yet the nature of one's predicament and the nature of other persons and their outlooks and intentions is always at least partially concealed from individuals. *Bacchae* manifests a profound sensitivity to the determining character of judgement and counsel, the manner of articulating desires or simply being articulated by them. When mortals, like Pentheus or the later Theban king, Oedipus, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, think they are most "agentful", most rely on their own *dunamis*, they are tragically most passive, most acted upon by forces that have escaped their notice.

Bacchae has presented a very differentiated, dynamic portrait of the will in different conditions of strength and weakness, articulacy and inarticulacy. The absence of self-awareness, which is the mark of the frolicking maenad, *mania* in its non-bacchant, non-divine form – *ateleston*, *abaccheutos* – is parallel with the tragic lack of self-reflexivity in Pentheus and the Kadmeians. Dionysus addresses humans as beings marked by epistemic, volitional and affective dimensions of experience and action. These are all entangled in the vicinity of the god. These are the contents of persons, the shape their motivations, determining their acts. It is this substance, this entanglement of knowledge, desire and emotion which is the subject of *Bacchae*. The rites – *teletai*, *orgai*, *baccheumata*, *narthēkophoria*[342] – are insufficient if they are not filled with or animated, as it were, by the right quality of agency.

2.9 Summary

This long chapter has been an exploration of *Bacchae* on its terms of will, desire, voluntariness, involuntariness, judgement, deliberation and choice. These are seen to become blurred in the vicinity of this god. This 'blurring' induces us to consider them as problematic. Perhaps, we may come to inquire, they are inherently "blurry" or "fuzzy" properties of persons and acts. We have seen that the same language of volition in Euripides finds a formal and systematic theorization in the ethical philosophy of agency in Aristotle. The problem of agency, choice, desire and the *ownership* of impulses and passions is a fundamental one. In Greek Tragedy it is not identical to the formulation of agency in terms of individual freedom that is a distinct topos of Western thought since the Enlightenment.

[342] See on *narthēkophoria* § 2.5 n. 271 on Pl. *Phd*. 69c 8 – d 2.

The poet presents a highly differentiated, dynamic picture of human agency. The philosopher is likewise sophisticated and delicate in nuancing and qualifying the classification of human agency and the relationship of subjects to their acts. He studies the complex thread-work of intention and imputability, the extent to which persons are or are not agents, to which they can be said to be the effective causes of their acts.

Euripides' 'Dionysus at Thebes' is not simply the account of a missionary god bringing his worship, being denied and asserting his authority. It is about the *contents*, so to speak, of resistance to him, the manner of his transforming that resistance and the meaning or *contents* of his worship. When this god is refused by a mortal, what part of the mortal does he attack and subdue – physical force is ineffective against gods, they 'easily get over human city-walls'[343] – what becomes the object of Dionysus' divine intentions in this play and other accounts of the god, if not human desiring and the cognitive powers to shape and select desires. The story of Pentheus' attitude and that of the Kadmeians provides a kind of shadow thrown by the light of Dionysus' fiery gifts. These are not doctrinal, no formulae or rituals that can be *perfunctorily* carried out in shows of obedience to his divine authority. They have emotional contents corresponding to the person of Dionysus, whose living identity inside his given *morphē* is or is not apprehended, with commensurate consequences. The principal point for him is that he *does* have in the recesses of himself, an identity, a deeper meaning and that very intelligible quality of a being having emotions which matter deeply to it, and caring for its *worth*.

The entire play takes as its theme the representation not simply of the actions of actors but also of the quality of the motivations, which actions and thoughts to express. Happiness, *eudaimonia*, is the *telos* of human life, in Aristotle. It is a question of actions not of states – *hexis*[344]. If it were a question of states, the sleeping man in the vegetable state, whom we might accurately associate with the maenads of *Bacchae*, might be called "happy", which he should not, to the philosopher's mind[345]. Yet *Bacchae* reveals the complex and dynamic relationship between inaction and actions, states, desires and choices. Dionysiac *eudaimonia* is a kind of condition, but one predicated on a chosen, *proaireton*, bearing. A desire that has been desired because it is the right desire with the right and nobler – *kallion, sophōteron* – "object". That object is really an *objective*: a quality of relation with Dionysus, with one's social others and towards one's own self, a mortal person amongst others. The ethical contents of Euripides' vision in *Bacchae*, focused upon agency and its limits, on qualities of

[343] 654: οὐχ ὑπερβαίνουσι καὶ τείχη θεοί;

[344] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1176 b.

[345] But as Kadmos says to Agauē, he can call her neither "happy nor unhappy" in her state of sleeping mind, 1260-2: εἰ δὲ διὰ τέλους/ ἐν τῶιδ' ἀεὶ μενεῖτ' ἐν ὧι καθέστατε, / οὐκ εὐτυχοῦσαι δόξετ' οὐχὶ δυστυχεῖν.

desire and their relation to a carefully shaded spectrum between knowledge and ignorance, is irrefutable.

Euripides has explored the complex living mechanism of human will, setting it against the projected will of a god. In its efforts at resistance, its vulnerability to the agency of others and in its dissipation, we find that the strange, dynamic qualities of "mind" and "heart" – *phrenes, prapis, nóos* – the inextricably cognitive *and* affective contents of persons and their more or less "agentful" handling of those, form the living matter of *Bacchae*. In the following chapter we further explore the problem of agency in *Bacchae*, in respect of evaluation, the question of the "right quality" of choice and desire and the articulation into different orders of desire. As has been done in this chapter with an ancient philosopher, so in the following shall we regard *Bacchae* in the light of a modern philosophy of agency.

3

Ah.[1]
Tragedy's Articulacy

Before the action of *Bacchae* begins there has been an "original error" – but whose fault it was, as is common in human history, is impossible to disentangle: Zeus desired Semelē, Semelē desired Zeus; Hera desired revenge; she caused Semelē to desire inadvertently something from Zeus that would destroy herself; her sisters did not wish to recognize her relationship, they wished to believe her father was conniving to save her repute; Dionysus wishes for revenge, he cannot be made to wish otherwise; Zeus does not want to get in his way and has long since given his consent to the apparently disproportionate response. Desire has been disastrous. It has entangled actors up with one another in ways they could never foresee. Everyone seems to have been the victim of themselves. Initial weak – unreflective – desiring has led to conditions of involuntariness.

3.1 Dionysus' Desire

In the previous chapter we saw the great extent to which different qualities of desiring are dramatized in *Bacchae*. Submitting the play to a discussion of agency around the terms found in Aristotle's work on ethics and volition – *hekousion*, *akousion*, *thumos*, *epithumia*,

[1] ἆ· 810: A prime example of Dionysiac language – not designative but the trace of something present, it is almost physically efficacious, a sound not a word pointing to a referent, it is the ambiguous utterance that begins the process of reconstitutingreconstitution Pentheus' will. Dodds: "Stop!" concurring with Tyrrell and Verrall. Dodds continuescontinued on 810-12, Pentheus' response to this vocalic ejaculation and the question that follows, tempting Pentheus to wish to see the maenads, "It is the answer, if not of a maniac, at least of a man whose reactions are ceasing to be normal: the question has touched a hidden spring in Pentheus' mind, and his self-mastery vanishes." But it does not vanish instanter, it will be a gradual process, with moments of resistance, a slow succumbing of the will. 'Touching a spring in his mind' paints a picture of a mechanical Pentheus, in which there is some truth, for Pentheus' problem is that he has been to 'mechanical' and insufficiently organic, flexible, growing in time, this will ultimately leave him *amēchanos*, helpless. Cf. Adkins, 1960: 323, in his discussion of the *Eudemian Ethics* and *Eth. Nich.* and Aristotle's handling of the problem (with my italics) "left for him by Gorgias and Plato", the problem of involuntariness introduced by the force, *bia*, of passions: ". . . we are dealing with *whole personalities* not with springs of action in isolation; and human beings have *both thoughts and desires.* Accordingly, an act which is an expression of either is *our* act and hence voluntary; which entails that all actions are voluntary save those that are done under external compulsion very strictly interpreted, and those which are done 'not in accordance with *dianoia*', however this phrase is to be understood. The problem of Gorgias is thus solved, and the dangers of Platonic language eliminated." Seaford's retaining of "Ah!" is more faithful to the text and its events than 'stop!', "Halt" (Buschor, 1977) and even Roux's "Ah? Bien! (Un silence) . . ." Seaford ad loc: "Ah! is uttered outside the metre, and this gives it a special emphasis appropriate to its marking the turning point in the play . . . the difficulty of determing its precise tone (much depends on its delivery)". Di Benedetto: "Ah!", SegalGibbons, 2001 and Carson, 2015 "Ahh!"; but Stuttard in Stuttard: "No, wait!". Cf. Eur. *Hel.* 445, *HF* 1051, *Or.* 1598, Soph. *Phil.* 1300 (urgent protest), Eur. *Rhes.* 799 (pain), *Ba.* 586, 596 (astonishment, aporia). See on Dodds on "*ea*, *ea*!" 644 at § 2.4 p. 99.

boulēsis, bouleusis, proairesis – terms that recur in the poetry of Euripides itself, we saw that self-interest (both real and apparent), wishing (reflective and unreflective, sincere and insincere), deliberation and calculation, are of principal interest in the play.

Dionysus wants to be wanted and he wants to be wanted sincerely. Many interpreters have discussed the very clear thematization of knowledge in *Bacchae*[2]. Here the aim is to establish the meaning of Dionysiac knowledge, which is so elusive. Not knowing or recognizing who and what the god is and what he means causes humans to resist him – in a circular fashion, to resist his knowledge. Euripides presents a god in whom we find revealed something about the nature of desire, its articulation in deliberation and through choice; and about our knowledge of desire. In this chapter we take further our study of the evaluation of desires and attempt to establish, this time reading *Bacchae* through a modern perspective of the philosophy of agency, what the important criteria for agency and personhood may be.

Does Necessity also govern deliberation – is one *fated to deliberate* in certain ways? This is an important question. Vernant, in the classic modern discussion of Greek views on agency, argued that even deliberation is deliberation over desires, which repose upon an unchosen personal constitution, *hexis,* and are therefore determined[3]. Tragedy represents or imitates not acts, not murders or rapes or the exposing of infants, but persuadings, deliberations, decisions, decisional processes and the absence or ineffectiveness of these. To put this more precisely: the action – *dramata* – presented on the Attic stage is the action of communication, deliberation and the expression of states. Before and after deeds stands *talk*: persuasion, choices and their interpretation, the discovery of their implications. This is the very matter of Tragedy: human subjects *qua* subject, but also ironically, subjects *qua* objects: objects of the apprehension of others and of the viewing audience. They are objects whose subjectivity we learn to know and recognize.

Tragic protagonists then, address each other and address themselves, as subjects. They feel that their actions have import or are related to "important" agents in significant ways. They live and act as though persuasion were possible, as though deliberation and decision were important. They discover not the tightness of things, the sovereignty of an absolute *anangkē*, but a looseness in the constitution of things. This *looseness* is the feeling of indeterminacy and contingency in the flow of events experienced as the present. Perspective, we shall

[2] E.g. Conacher, 1967: 73-7, Segal: passim, esp. 272-347, Leinieks, 257-75, Radke, 154-203; Reynolds-Warnhoff, 1997.

[3] "Le caractère, *ēthos,* propre à chaque genre d'homme repose sur une somme de dispositions (*héxeis*) qui se développent par la pratique et se fixent en habitudes [here he refers the reader to *EN* 1103 a 5, 1139 a 34-5].] Une fois le caractère formé, le sujet agit conformément à ces dispositions et ne saurait autrement… Mais à aucun moment Aristote ne cherche à fonder sur une analyse psychologique la capacité que posséderait le sujet, tant que ses dispositions ne sont pas fixées, de se décider d'une façon ou d'une autre et d'assumer ainsi la responsabilité de ce qu'il fera plus tard." Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 60.

discover, is what is determining. Looking back, even looking back from a projected future, can have something like an overpowering *necessity-effect*[4]. Humans are typically (uniquely and therefore definingly) prospective, planning against a future of alternative outcomes and apparent options. They are creatures of *elpis*, anticipation. *Tuchē,* the underdetermined present and *elpis,* the undetermined future, are perpetually absorbed by the mind and its perspective-taking, into the pattern – Archilocus' *rusmos*[5] – of an apparently overdetermined past governed by Necessity. This is the *rhythm* which we feel we discern in the course of events and phenomena.

It is a striking feature of the myths of Dionysus that the act he requires from humans is a cognitive transformation, a modification of what and how they *know*. He does not return to punish humans who fail to sacrifice animals to him. It is not a *deed* that he punishes, such as Odysseus' crew's eating of the cattle of Hyperion[6]. It is not an act such as that which inspired Artemis' pity for the wild animals that had been the victims of Zeus' sacrifice[7]. We do not find, with Dionysus, the unaccounted-for desire of a goddess, conveyed by the despised interpreter of divine will, the seer Calchas, such as we find in Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis*[8]. Instead we see a lapse in, or inadequacy of, awareness.

Of course, one may say that when sailors are so remiss or when one has not paid the gods their due, that is also problematic because of ignorance and, whether out of ignorance or not, the gods are angry because they have not been recognized. Yet, in *Bacchae* it is ignorance and recognition *themselves* that are articulated *as* problematic, and not only the *practical* consequences of these. Recognition and 'practical consequences' can never, to be sure, be cleanly separated. A deed of reverence is the token of recognition; recognition motivates the expression of recognition. With Dionysus things are more evidently dialectical and it is the

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[4] Rivier, who argued that *anagkē* in Tragedy is not to be understood as issuing from the human mind but as having an objective character, also described it as something named as "ἀνάγκη perceived as an element inscribed in the dramatic situation": "En résumé, la décision est partout présente. Elle n'est pas toujours accompagnée d'une délibération. Et le moment du choix est regulièrement omis. En lieu et place, ce que nous trouvons, c'est l'effet d'une contrainte, souvent (mais pas toujours) nommée par le personnage ou ses témoins, – d'une ἀνάγκη perçue comme un élément de possession inscrit dans la situation dramatique." Rivier, 1968: 36.

[5] See Archilocus fr. 128. 6-7: ἀλλὰ χαρτοῖσίν τε χαῖρε καὶ κακοῖσιν ἀσχάλα / μὴ λίην, γίνωσκε δ' οἷος ῥυσμὸς ἀνθρώπους ἔχει, "In your rejoicing let your joy, in hardship your despairs/ be tempered: understand the pattern of things [*hoios rysmos*] shaping human affairs." (trans. West, 1993: 11) and above, § 2.6 n. 360. Such a sense of the rhythmic shape or patterning of events and "lives" is of course also famously articulated in Herodotus, a man so struck by both the wondrous strange and normal patterning that gives the world its complex character.

[6] Hom. *Od.* 12. 260-390. Odysseus' men have been warned, and that by the seer Teiresias and by Circe through their importunate captain. They act nevertheless and when they are punished it is not for their motives, or the quality of their desires and acts, but simply for those acts.

[7] There the creatures (the unborn young of the hare that became a meal for Zeus' eagle) were made into sign objects, instruments rather than the living subjects they were in her eyes, see Aesch. *Ag.* 134-7.

[8] Calchas' interpretation: Eur. *IA* 89-93. Despised seer: Eur. *IA* 520-1, see also on seers § 2.2.1.1 p. 61 n. 73§ 2.2.1.2 n. 103, § 3.3.11, § 4.3.7 n.166, § 5.2.2 n. 13.

recursive movement between *ēthos* and *praxeis*, character and acts, or acts and meaning, object and significance, and vice versa – this perpetual constitution of each by the other, that takes primary place. With Dionysus alone of the gods does knowledge, *an sich*, its nature, acquisition and loss, become such an important topic. With him it is not only the act of recognition that counts but the quality and authentic character of recognizing, i.e. of motivation. Dionysus in *Bacchae* is truly a figure in whom the subjective character of things, their emotional, psychological, cognitive contents, have primacy. Hence authenticity is always such a problem in his vicinity. Deeds can be counterfeited, emotions can be acted out, but the right bearing, the true feeling and the quality of care is something that matters to him and that he wants tested against the *basanos*, touchstone, of his presence[9].

With Dionysus in Euripides, ignorance and the willingness and unwillingness that has motivated it, is expressly the problem. In *Bacchae* it is an inner state that is wanting or incomplete. It is not what the sisters of Semelē did or did not *do*, which has been a problem for Dionysus, but the very knowledge and recognition *itself*, which is disastrously omitted. What Dionysus has wanted is not something that can be falsified or fulfilled through a belated act. It is an internal condition, it is knowledge as affect, that matters with him. It will be insufficient to simply carry the narthex, as Kadmos does. Dionysus wants an *authentic*, unfalsified and, we learn, unfalsifiable recognition. That will be the expression of the emotional and cognitive relation he craves. The spirit of actions and, related to that, the problem of the falsifiability of acts and intentions, is of paramount importance in the proximity of Dionysus.

This god requires of mortals a certain orientation towards himself, a cognitive adjustment and the suitable, concomitant emotional bearing: *eusebein*, "reverence", "healthy terror", an entering into the atmosphere and the spirit of things, which he brings[10]. Apollo in *Iliad* brings a pestilence upon the Achaeans because his priest has been dishonoured. There the dishonouring is similar to the insult in *Bacchae*. The standing of the god has been offended

[9] The recursiveness between acts and states, as between emotions and choices, is one that causes things to appear ambiguous. There is a constant dialectical and dynamic relation between these. This dialectical and animate character of the relation between properties of being and doing is something one tries from many different angles to get at. I suspect this being-in-motion of things, this dialectic between *hexis* and *praxis*, *ēthos* and *proairesis,* is what accounts for the equivocation we sometimes discern in Aristotle: what looks to some like the "unsoundness" or "looseness" of his arguments. See Taylor, C.C.W. 2006: 164-5 on Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1113b 11-14 and esp. his n. 14 on the scholarly disputes on these important apparent inconsistencies.

[10] *Sebein* "reverent awe", "Ehrfurcht" is an important state to be in in *Bacchae*: τῆς δυσσεβείας, 263; {Δι.} ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ' ὄργι' ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ., 476; παρ' ἐμοί· σὺ δ' ἀσεβὴς αὐτὸς ὢν οὐκ εἰσορᾶις., 502; σέβεταί σ' Εὔιος, 566; ὁ Διόνυσος ἀνὰ μέλαθρα·/σέβετέ νιν. 589-90; ἦμαρ ἐς νύκτα τ' εὐ-/αγοῦντ' εὐσεβεῖν, 1008-9; τὸ σωφρονεῖν δὲ καὶ σέβειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν/κάλλιστον· 1150-1; ὑμῖν ἐγένεθ' ὅμοιος, οὐ σέβων θεόν., 1302. See also 3.3.6 on the contrast of piety and impiety in *Bacchae*; and note the connection with that other important and disputed value, *semnos*, "holy", "solemn" attribute of mountains 411, 718; the darkness of night 486; and the fire epiphany of Dionysus 1083. On Greek piety, see Musurillo, 1966; Nilsson, 1969; Mikalson,1991. On *asebeia* see § 2.2.5 p. 86 n. 184.

because, as the seer Kalchas explains to the Greeks, the pleas of his priest, Chryses, through whom the god's agency is delegated or distributed, have been disregarded by Agamemnon, (οὕνεκα τὸν Χρύσην ἠτίμασεν ἀρητῆρα, Hom. *Od.* 1.11)[11]. In Homer, however, there is still a specific act of offence, the taking of Chryseis and the refusal to yield her to her father. The accent in *Bacchae* is much more strongly on the contents or meaning of acts and omissions.

With Dionysus in *Bacchae* it is a pure failure of apprehension, a neglected or absent act that is the mortal lapse: simply taking Dionysus for less than he is. Apollo, "the most Greek of all the Greek gods" according to some, is remote, "works from afar" (ἑκηβόλου Ἀπόλλωνος, *Od.* 1.14[12]) and that is an important difference with his step-brother, Dionysus[13]. With Apollo there is not this pronounced rhythm of near and far, distance and sudden provocative presence. Dionysus is suddenly at hand, amongst humans, nearer than they realize: the most present of gods, his peculiarity is this *parousia*, his being nearby. He is at hand[14]. The foreign 'priest' of Dionysus, insulted by the Theban king, is in fact the very god himself. Dionysus wishes to be recognized for what he is, not a mortal, but the son of Zeus. The sin of omission in Dionysiac myths is not only an act omitted: an attitude that motivated the act has not been learned, it is not present. An inner condition has failed to be *there* and manifest itself, a desire which is the mother of a new kind of knowledge. Here is the expression of a subtle, cognitively and inter-subjectively complex world of relations between mortals and gods.

For these reasons questions of desire and will, and the readiness and willingness of subjects, arise throughout *Bacchae*. The women of Thebes did not wish to accept the divinity of Semelē's son; Pentheus does not want to recognize the nature of Dionysus and the meaningfulness of his rites and those of his *thiasos*, the entourage of female co-celebrants. Kadmos declares in his first words in the play, that he is prepared, *hetoimos*: "I am come, ready, with the god's effects" ἥκω δ' ἕτοιμος τήνδ' ἔχων σκευὴν θεοῦ·, 180. A certain readiness, an orientation – neither purely passive nor thoroughly active – is what Dionysus

[11] Hom. *Il.* 8-100.

[12] Most Greek: see Burkert *GR*: 223 "Man hat Apollon oft den ‚griechischsten der Götter' genannt, nicht ohne Grund". *Hekatos* 'Working from afar', 'far-ranging': *Hymn. Hom. Eis Apollōna* passim, e.g. Ἀπόλλωνος ἑκάτοιο 1, Ἀπόλλωνος ἑκαέργου 56, 63, 177 and Hom. *Il.* 7.83, 20. 295 and Burkert *GR*: 227 "als 'Ferntreffer' hat man Apollons Beinamen *hekatebolos*, *hekebolos*, *hekatos* verstanden", where note also Anm. 232: "Das Rätsel liegt darin, dass die Namen hekatebóloss und hékatos vom Namen der Göttin Hekate nicht zu trennen sind: Chantraine 1968, 328".

[13] They do not stand in simple opposition, rather in something like a rhythmically defined inter-relation. Apollo is designated in *Iliad* similarly to how Dionysus repeatedly is in *Bacchae*. So at Hom. *Il.* 1.9 the god who avenges his *arētēr*, "prayer", "imprecator" (as Dionysus avenges the treatment of his "vicar", himself) is called Λητοῦς καὶ Διὸς υἱός . Nietzsche's very influential opposition of these gods, for all its stimulating brilliance as a poetic exercise itself, is not one that illuminates *Bacchae* very helpfully. See Wood, 2011 and Suárez de la Torre in Bernabé [ed.], 2013: 58-81.

[14] On "Presence and Absence in the Parousia of Dionysos", in a discussion of aspects of the "xenos attributes in Euripides' *Bacchae*", see Schwartz in Bernabé [ed.], 2013: 301-28, esp. 307-12. Also Henrichs in *Masks,* 31-6 and Detienne, 1986.

requires of mortals. This is what is dramatized in all the myths of resistance to him[15]. "Willingly receive the god, pour a drink offering, dress your head": have and manifest a willingness, that is all it takes. Thus, Teiresias exhorts the obdurate young king, 312-13[16].

What is the source of knowledge, where does authority in matters of the truth of the gods lie? The chorus celebrates the gift of Dionysus, which belongs equally to the rich and the common man alike, 421-2. "That would I accept" τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν 433, that which the common people consider right or valuable and hence "make use of", "practise", *chrētai*, sings the chorus, 430, 433[17]. This verb *dechesthai*, "receiving", expresses an openness, an important readiness, *hetoimotēs*. That is what Dionysus wants from mortals, and he wants it, *crucially*, uncompelled. Thus, at the climax of the work, it is as a failure of desiring on the part of the Thebans that Dionysus explains the destruction he has brought upon them: this catastrophe would not have transpired if they had known to be of healthy mind, "when they did not wish to" ὅτ' οὐκ ἠθέλετε, 1342[18]. They have brought it, he says, on themselves. The knowledge of Dionysus is indissociable from a desire for that knowledge; the Kadmeians have "learnt us late, when you ought to have you did not recognize (us)" ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἤιδετε, 1345.

Bacchae, as typically tragic drama does, presents a contest of wills. What humans want and what they fail to want is an important theme of staged drama, as it is in the drama of historical life. Dionysus is seen here to desire – *thelein* – and have what he desires, in thematic contrast with those too desirous, too ineffectual and ephemeral creatures, mortal humans. Too kingly Pentheus – τὸ βασιλικὸν λίαν, 671 – admonishes the Stranger, threatening that "We shall guard your body within our prison", and as often the retort is simply that the wishes of the Stranger, that is to say of the god himself, as he in fact hints with αὐτός, must prevail: "the god himself will release me, whenever I wish – *thelō*", 497-8:

> Pe. εἱρκταῖσί τ' ἔνδον σῶμα σὸν φυλάξομεν.
> Di. λύσει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω.

[15] See also Aesch. *Lykourgeia* Fr. 57-60; Ar. *Av.*276, Scholia. See also Deichgräber, 1939, Jouan, 1992, Mureddu, 1994, West, 1990.

[16] See § 2.6 p. 118 for text and translation.

[17]See 161 below, Cf. *Med.* 118-30. At Eur. *IA* 17-20, Agamemnon has an exchange with his servant in which he expresses a yearning for the life of the socially low. It is not exactly a position on the value of the simple people, but certainly represents a sense of the value, and better quality of their lives, *vis à vis* the powerful. That this has a status that links it to the important themes of the work seems attested to in the recurrence of the question of the value of lives in Menelaus' treatment of the servant (and instrumental view of the life and person of his niece) at Eur. *IA* 303-16.

[18] *Ethelein*: "wish", "want", "to be willing" but in Homer "with neg., almost, = *dunamai* 'be able to'" *LSJ s.v.*; see also Chantraine on *boulomai* and *ethelein* at § 2.5 n. 248.

Pe. Inside locked up quarters we shall guard your body.
Di. Me himself the *daimōn* will release [*lusei*], whenever I want.

This prophecy[19] and assertion of the absolute, sovereign superiority of Dionysiac will, is soon demonstrated and fulfilled. The Stranger escapes his bonds and imprisonment (614-41) and Pentheus, that pathetic picture of mortal ineffectualness setting itself against divine will, comes to embody the futility of mortal reckoning and its hybristic desire to contain the Dionysiac body.

Pentheus fails to contain the Stranger, to bind him in chains. He is astonished to come outside and find this leader of bacchants emancipated, 642-6. Yet it has been "the one who causes the clustering vine to grow for mortals that has released the stranger"[20]. Still, Pentheus does not recognize what he is dealing with and orders "locked up all the towers in a circle", 653. The city, which itself has been leaking its emotionally incontinent population, must be the vessel to bind and contain the Dionysiac menace. "What, do not gods get over even city-walls?" asks Dionysus, τί δ'; οὐχ ὑπερβαίνουσι καὶ τείχη θεοί; 655[21]. Immortals are distinct from mortals by the closeness of their wishes to their consummations. There is a dangerous, uncertain space between what mortals desire and what they receive. For mortals the question of the import of desires always arises, and it does so most manifestly in the kind of reflective and evaluative moments that Tragedy seems designed to show forth. That is not the case with gods. For the gods only realizing desires matter, much less so what those desires and their consequences mean.

[19] After the fact, the Stranger asks ironically, "Didn't I tell you, or were you not listening, that I said a certain person would release me?"me': οὐκ εἶπον, ἢ οὐκ ἤκουσας, ὅτι λύσει μέ τις; 649.

[20] ὃς τὴν πολύβοτρυν ἄμπελον φύει βροτοῖς. 651

[21] It is suggestive to read this, and indeed *Bacchae* generally, recalling Solon, another fundamental 'civic poet'. See Sol. 4.27-8 where the 'yard doors and high walls' do not want to keep out the 'public ill' δημόσιον κακὸν: αὔλειοι δ' ἔτ' ἔχειν οὐκ ἐθέλουσι θύραι, / ὑψηλὸν δ' ὑπὲρ ἕρκος ὑπέρθορεν. The challenge that faces humans in the social world of the *polis* lies not in negotiating the boundaries between 'the inside of culture and the outside of nature', but in recognizing, learning and handling the contents of themselves.

3.2.1 Agents and Failing Agency

In the *Bacchae* it is not the case that mortals are "Coupée[s] de l'ordre général du monde gouverné par les dieux"[22]. This is a world governed and penetrated by gods, by Zeus and his son Dionysus who moves – we see him – amongst mortals. The events of the play are bracketed by oracular predictions that precede the action represented and prophesy beyond its conclusion[23]. Seats of augury and oracular sanctity also threaten to be destroyed by human and sub-human violence[24]. In the *Bacchae*, much happens to the protagonists, which cannot reasonably be attributed to their own intentions. Crucially, however, these are the consequences of an initial desire, a prior error of will, which *was* theirs. What we find is not that humans are either free or not free in their choosing, but that certain kinds of choosing can lead to the diminishment or even the complete dissipation of any faculty for choice. There is a complex and richly graduated spectrum between, what in the historical world are, the equally rare extremes of full or complete absence of, volitional autonomy.

Human will does not always entirely belong to humans, but is often the consequence of an original error, which is imputable to an act committed or omitted on account of a poor judgement or a ruinous desire. This is the case in the context of *Bacchae.* The daughters of Kadmos did not *want* to believe that their sister was loved by Zeus; they misread her motivations. The old king of Thebes *chose* in advance to adopt too realistic, too politick an attitude to Dionysus. His will, the purity of his desire for Dionysus and the relation that Dionysus has come to reclaim, this was always compromised by Kadmos' too clever calculations, his *sophismata*[25].

Pentheus' refutations of the accounts about Dionysus[26], his rejection of bacchic celebrations – this is motivated rejection, a *chosen* stand taken by the young *tyrannos*. He makes clear that he regards Dionysus and his worship as spurious, the mere pretext for concealing base desires and not anything that can reflect (certainly not realize) new, healthier forms of desire[27]. The mortal protagonists of Attic Drama, like all mortals, do not choose their

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[22] Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 74.

[23] The life after Thebes of Kadmos has been predicted by an oracle of Zeus: χρησμὸς ὡς λέγει Διός, 1333. The events of *Bacchae* had been assented to long in advance by the father of Dionysus: πάλαι τάδε Ζεὺς οὐμὸς ἐπένευσεν πατήρ. 1349.

[24] Not entirely human: Kadmos and Harmonia, turned into snakes, will lead a motley army, destroying cities until they destroy an oracle of Apollo, 1330-3. Oracles: ὅταν δὲ Λοξίου χρηστήριον/ διαρπάσωσι 1336-7. Pentheus, who himself is called a non-human, earth-born snake man or spawn of Gorgons, 987-96, had threatened to turn upside down the seat of the seer, Teiresias, 456-51.

[25] *Sophismata*: "ingenious stratagems", "clever schemes", see § 3.3.1 "Theban Stratagems".

[26] 219-20; τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα/Διόνυσον, ὅστις ἔστι, 242-7.

[27] Pentheus has been abroad, *ekdēmos*, and Dionysus has penetrated the city, *hēkō*, but we are never given a hint that Pentheus is anything other than his own man, self-conscious and conscious of others, reproving (ἀναίνομαι, πάτερ, 251), monitoring (νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον, 252) finding ridiculous (πολὺν γέλων 250) and diagnosing (οὐχ ὑγιὲς οὐδὲν ἔτι λέγω τῶν ὀργίων, 262) - as those in the grip of *mania* or divine control do

inclinations, but, like all mortals, they do have the faculty to reflect upon their desires and motives and to select which inclinations they activate. Pentheus, over the course of *Bacchae*, is given many opportunities to pause, and to *wish* differently. The Kadmeians' have made choices, which have engendered this calamitous circumstance of frenzy: the condition, precisely, of loss of choice.

Pentheus, like his aunts, sees the world of persons and events in practical, disenchanted terms. He prejudges the bacchic rites as specious, *plastaisi bachkaisi*, mere pretext, *prophasis*, for the pursuit of selfish pleasure[28]. Darkness and invisibility are cloaks for concealing desires whose nature is revealed through their very secretiveness. It is the same cloak of obscurity he will think he can exploit to go unobserved, unembarrassed through the streets of the city[29]. Pentheus lives in a transactional world: he will be greedy to see the nocturnal rites, offering money for the illegitimate privilege[30]. This is how we necessarily understand *his* motivations. We understand Pentheus by the motives he reflexively ascribes to others: self-interest is the cause by which he construes the motives for behaviour. Not knowing the nature of his self, he will never understand what authentic self-interest is.

In *Bacchae*, we witness processes in time, sharply delineated against values defined as timeless[31]. Decisional faculties yield to exterior influence and the connection between prior and subsequent self is (a precious bond, but, always tenuous), undone by this god called elsewhere *Lysios*, "releaser" and *Eleuthereus*, "liberator", the god whom human bonds cannot hold[32]. In these terms, for example, may we read the spectacle of Pentheus' strange transformation. What we are given to *see* is the dissolution of a man's capacity for *proairesis*; the slipping away, gradual not instantaneous, of *bouleusis*, deliberation, the capacity to take counsel with self. Pentheus becomes a figure of *gré*. Willingly he follows Dionysus, willingly he cedes decision to the vengeful god. But we cannot say that it is his will that motivates him, that he *wills* it. When they are abducted, mortals discover how they are held ransom to

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not. Later we see, as a differentiated process, his cognitive collapse; here when we meet him first he is presented as a figure of only "normal" violence, when for example he threatens to bring the bacchic worship to an end and cut off the Stranger's head from his body: 239-41: εἰ δ' αὐτὸν εἴσω τῆσδε λήψομαι χθονός, / παύσω κτυποῦντα θύρσον ἀνασείοντά τε/ κόμας, τράχηλον σώματος χωρὶς τεμών.

[28] "New" is identified with the dangerous and specious: κλύω δὲ νεοχμὰ τήνδ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν κακά 219. *Plastaisi*: "moulded", "shaped" means given its form by a specific intentional agent: γυναῖκας ἡμῖν δώματ' ἐκλελοιπέναι/ πλασταῖσι βακχείαισιν, ἐν δὲ δασκίοις/ ὄρεσι θοάζειν 220-2. *Prophasis*: πρόφασινπρόφαζιν μὲν ὡς δὴ μαινάδας θυοσκόους, 224. Hidden motives of others: 221-5, 255-7; women's latent motives become released 260-2, 453-9 and 486-7. *Prophasis*, we may say, is implicitly set against *prophēteia*, *prophētēs*, the similarity and difference of words (forms) are used by Euripides to articulate their disputed meanings (contents). For *prophētēs* see 9 n. 42, 61, 83.

[29] Pentheus reads others as motivated to hide their motives and thinks he can hide himself: 816, 838, but ultimately he will be more seen than seeing: ὤφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας· 1075.

[30] Money for night spying: μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δοὺς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν. 812.

[31] On time in *Bacchae* see Thumiger, 2007: 171-85.

[32] *Lysios*: Paus. 2.2.6, 2.67.6, 9.16.6; *Orph. Hy.* 50 (Λυσίου Ληναίου). 2, 8. *Eleuthereus*: Paus. 1.20.3, 1.29.2; Plut. *Quaest. Conv.* 716b, οἱ παλαιοὶ τὸν θεὸν Ἐλευθερέα καὶ Λύσιον ἐκάλουν.

their own desires. Dionysus, captured by mortals, in turn captivates them, usurping or neutralizing that which above all things had distinguished them from other animals: the fundamentally *temporally* construing faculty, and the capacity for *evaluative* decision-making.

Reflection, counsel, thought - the cognitive articulation through language, an evaluative and internal process – these, for Aristotle, are the decisive ingredients, the set of capacities that, by its absence or presence, determines the *modalité d'action*. This too, in various formulations, is the recurrent theme of *Bacchae,* as indeed it is the matter of Tragedy generally. *Aphrōn, Aphroditē*, *thelxiphrones Erōtes*[33]; overflowing cups; the magnetism of personal beauty; forms of persuasion and seduction and their escalation to enchantment; that extreme form of mental and volitional depletion which is the Dionysiac eviction of the mind from itself in *mania* (typically a feminized *Pendant* to *atē*): these forms of willingness, expressed through and distinguishing modalities of action, constitute the very material of *Bacchae.*

The play dramatizes the exhaustion of deliberative possibilities and the succumbing of the subject as decisive agent – "apprehending its own self, in its rapports with others and with nature, as a centre of decision"[34] – to enchantment, that is: to external agency. *Bacchae* also dramatizes the return to decision, precisely in fact as Vernant here puts it, through the recovery of self-apprehension and the recuperation of the mind. And here the mind is seen as the apprehender of rapports with others and with nature, it is the constituter of relations. This all, we see most evidently in the so called "psychotherapy scene", 1200-1300[35]. A moving scale of *degrees of willingness* is a subtext of the action of *Bacchae*. Hence the constant matter of the work is consciousness; irresponsibility and responsibility; the weakening hold on language and of the purchase of language on reality; and the constitution of the self and its agency.

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[33] Bacchants emit wild cries and "foam", *aphron*, ἡ δ' ἀφρὸν ἐξιεῖσα, 1122. This is a pun on "mindless" as in related *aphrosunē* at 387, 1301, see chp. 6 on *phrōn* and *phrenes*. Aphrodite is used metonymously for that "mindless" sexual appetance which Pentheus attributes to all women, but not to himself, the man who will become mindless and thus first amenable to being dressed as a female bacchant: 225, 236, 459. *Thelxiphrones*: the demons of erotic passion are "mind enchanting" οἱ θελξίφρονες νέμον- /ται θνατοῖσιν Ἔρωτες 404-5. It is worth mentioning that its amongst the bacchants that Aphrodite and the Erōtes, as well as the Charites and *Pothos,* Desire, are positivelypoitively valorized, see 401-16.

[34] Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 61.

[35] Pscychotherapy Scene: Devereux, 1970, who makes a "purely psychiatric analysis" of the scene of Agauē's recovery; also Parsons, 1988. For psychoanalyses of Pentheus see Seidensticker, 1972 and Sale 1972. On psychotherapy and Tragedy see Arthur, 1977; Segal, 1978; Gill, 1985; Padel, 1992, 1995; and on Padel: Gill, 1996. For a list of psychoanalytic readings of *Bacchae* see Thumiger, 2007: 60 n. 2, her own chp. 2 on verbal instantiations of character representation, "The private self", in *Bacchae*, is a very subtle and fruitful cognitive-pyschological handling of the question. See Jeanmaire, 1951 on "La 'mania' divine'" "Le Ménadisme", also Dodds, 1951. Pigeaud, in her edition of Grégoire & Meunier (2011), treats the play as a study in psychological breakwdownbreakdown.

Value, the verifiability of truth and the danger of counterfeitures and impostors form recurrent problems in Greek Drama. Authenticity is the precipitating problem of *Bacchae*: authenticity of relations and the authenticity of identity. How to live an authentic life, what properly to value, what to desire in order to live in accordance with true reality: this is what the chorus sings of, what Teiresias the seer adjures, and what Dionysus has come to attest. He has come to punish false desire and motive, the shallowness of pragmatic will; mere willingness, where what has been demanded of mortals is an elected affinity, *Wahlverwandschaft*. He requires this paradoxical choice from mortals to surrender precisely their selective and discriminating mind to the god's desires, to surrender to the god's spontaneous mode. Dionysus brings to Thebes, "even if she does not want it", the very mode of transcended (in its negative form, abandoned) decision.

3.2.2 Tragic Agency, Tragic Person

Harry Frankfurt's essay "Freedom of Will and the Concept of a Person"[36] has been influential, and that, not least, through its having been taken up so prominently by Charles Taylor. For Frankfurt, the common philosophical analysis of the concept of a person – an entity predicated with states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics – "is not really analysis of *that* concept at all", as he sets out correctively or polemically, to show[37]. In philosophy as in philology, we are reminded, scholars cannot settle on definitions of the most basic categories[38]. Those categories however will absolutely determine our interpretations of such works and phenomena as *Bacchae*, Dionysus and his Theatre. Traditionally, much energy has been devoted to defining personhood through distinguishing humans from non-humans.

Our object of study is very specifically Tragedy and a single tragedy, not "culture" or "religion", even though we must see Tragedy as an expression of (constituted of and recursively re-constituting) ancient religion and culture. In Tragedy, personhood and agency (ethically, philosophically, psychologically, physically articulated in contrast with animal and with god) is a problem, and that most intensely in *Bacchae*. Frankfurt argues that in

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[36] Frankfurt, 1971.

[37] Frankfurt, 1971: 5.

[38] The mind-body problem, which underpins the Cartesianism criticised by Vernant and which it may be said receives a kind of dramatic treatment in *Bacchae* (with its wild human bodies, bestializations and now embodied, now disembodied god see § 6.1.1), is also detected in the mainstream philosophical discussion by Frankfurt. See Strawson *Individuals* 1959 and Ayer *The Concept of a Person* 1963, as representative of the general view: "What concerns Ayer and Strawson is the problem of understanding the relation between mind and body, rather than the quite different problem of understanding what it is to be a creature that not only has a mind and a body but is also a person.", Frankfurt, 1971:5 n. 1.

delineating personhood it does not matter if what it is is species-specific, whether animals do or do not share personhood with humans. The criteria of personhood, rather than mere segregation of species ". . . are designed to capture those attributes which are the subject of our most humane concern with ourselves and the source of what we regard as most important and most problematical in our lives."[39] Similarly, in *Bacchae* there is a tolerance of the contiguousness of species and a privileging, rather, of the questions which are 'most important and most problematical in our lives'[40].

For Frankfurt the essential difference between persons and non-persons "is to be found in the structure of a person's will". All manner of creatures have desires and motives, but only humans form what Frankfurt, and Taylor following him, will call "second-order desires". Humans alone not only want, choose, and are moved to act in certain ways, but also "may want to have (or not have) certain desires and motives. They are capable of wanting to be different, in their preferences and purposes, from what they are". Desiring certain desires, wanting to want this and to not want that, this is a product of certain unique cognitive

[39] Frankfurt, 1971: 6.

[40] What matters in Dionysus' 'neighbourhood' is not asserting or preserving a radical difference between humans and animals. The closeness of the human and animal is manifest; they are interleading estates. The bacchants dress themselves in the skins of wild animals, the *nebros* (111, 137, 696), and are likened above all to wild animals: 135-9, 164-6, 699-703, 866-76, 977, 1056-7. From the very moment of his birth, and ever after, Dionysus is associated with wild animals, as much as with "spiritual" purity, *hosia* [70, ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ-/ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν 76-7, 114, his bacchants evoke Purity as goddess at 370-1, Pentheus utters "impure *hybris* against Dionysus" 374, and is an "impure man" who has incarcerated the Stranger, 613]: 101-4, 918-24 436-37, 1017-19: φάνηθι ταῦρος ἢ πολύκρανος ἰδεῖν/ δράκων ἢ πυριφλέγων/ ὁρᾶσθαι λέων. The division wild/tame is of great significance here. The domesticated becomes wild and the wild can be tame or gentle, the savage god makes others wild but is himself only ever seen as amenable (*eutrepes* 440, 844), tame, meek, *prāos*: ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' ἡμῖν πρᾶος οὐδ' ὑπέσπασεν/φυγῆι πόδ', 436-7. Pentheus and the Thebans are ever snake people: 537-44, 1025-6, 1155, 1330-2, 1357-62. Actaeon, Pentheus' cousin suffered the fate of becoming a wild animal torn savagely apart by his domestic beasts, 338-39: ὃν ὠμόσιτοι σκύλακες ἃς ἐθρέψατο/ διεσπάσαντο and 1291. Pentheus wants to incarcerate Dionysus with the horses of the House of Kadmos, by their mangers, 509-10. He will vainly chase after Dionysus at the bulls' stalls, 618-9. The house and city, a domestic and political container, cannot contain the familiar forces that had been suborned to human intentions. The yoke of necessity in Aeschylus is here the broken bridle and the unbolted stable, *herktai,* 497, 549. Cf. Animal and Human analogies underpinning arguments in Republic, eg. Pl. *Resp.* 459-60, male and female as 'one hunting pack' Pl. *Resp.* 451d, 466 c-d *inter al.*; likeness with animals and difference from animals rests on the mediation of their sociality through language in Aristotle, Arist. *Pol.* 1253). See also Burkert *GR*: 104-107 "Tier und Gott", where we read about the exceptionalness of Dionysus in this regard too, 105: "Und doch vermeiden es die Griechen, auch nur metaphorisch Zeus und Hera 'Stier' oder 'Kuh' zu nennen, was doch etwa Ägypter und Ugariter gegenüber ihren Göttern ohne Scheu getan haben . . . Eine Ausnahme macht Dionysos. Er wird im Kultlied aus Elis als 'Stier' angerufen, zu kommen, 'mit dem Rindsfuß tobend', als 'würdiger Stier'; er wird nicht selten mit Stierhörnern dargestellt; er hat in Kyzikos ein stiergestaltiges Kultbild; von ihm erzählt auch ein Mythos, wie er als Stierkalb geschlachtet und von den frevelhaften Vorzeitwesen, den Titanen, gegessen wurde. Dieser Mythos allerdings ist in der klassischen Zeit verdrängt, geheimgehalten, da er mit dem öffentlichen Bild des Göttlichen nicht vereinbar ist." For recent work on the essential difference – one often not recognized by primary order, scientific methodologies – between humans and animals see Suddendorf, 2013; Tomasello, 2001, 2014; Taylor, 2016. Further on animal and human in *Bacchae* see Segal: 1982, 27-54, Thumiger, 2006, 2007: 122-37. Those denizens of the Dionysiac neighbourhood, which are satyrs, of course, embody the fusion or 'contiguousness' of human and animal; see on the satyr, for example, Lissarague in *Masks*: 207-20 and in Winkler, J. & Zeitlin, F. [edd.], 1990: 228-36. On animals and plants and the porousness of these natural divisions, (corollary of the transgressiveness, which has formed the basis for so many readings of Dionysus and of myth.

capacities, the critical faculties specific apparently to humans: "No other animals have the capacity for reflective self-evaluation that is manifested in the formation of second-order desires."[41]

What we find in Frankfurt then (and, as we shall see, in Euripides), is a model of personhood defined by levels. These strata, significantly for our reading of *Bacchae*, can be concealed, covered from view, not evident but, owing to their imbricated character, becoming so in certain contexts. A person is marked not only by consciousness or the mere perception or registering of events and sensations, but by consciousness of their consciousness. A self, properly speaking, is a self that knows itself as such. Personhood is a recessive, a deferred kind of property, having hierarchized orders and levels within it, forming a kind of interior horizon that recedes and expands as one pursues it. A person is rather like a house in the way we speak of it as having levels, spaces within space and façades.

Frankfurt employs a special, differentiated notion of will. Will is not simply inclination to act in this way or another; it is not "co-extensive with the notion of first-order desires". First-order desires, which we may share with all other creatures, are unevaluated, unprocessed by critical faculties. We might think of the first as the order of *Gré*. These desires arise and subside, they are or are not acted upon. When Pentheus, falling under the Dionysiac charisma, says at 820 "lead me away as quickly as possible, I grudge you any delay", what we are being made to see is a man succumbing to the dissipation of the faculties for second-order desiring, a man in whom *orexis*, appetite, and *boulē*, conscious desire, expand and *bouleumata* contracts[42].

For Frankfurt, it is important that the "will" is not this kind of desire or *boulē*. Desiring or inclining is insufficient for "will"," which he takes as "effective desire", "one that moves (or would move) a person all the way to action."[43] Desire is more manifold than will; one can have many desires, but does not act on all of them. What one actually does is what one *really wills* at any given time or, through failure of will or some other incapacitation, what one has insufficiently willed *not* to do. Much of what persons spend their time doing is making their desires commensurate with what they wish their desires to be, or making their will the desires that will become activated, i.e. those desires on which they act: "Someone has a

[41] Frankfurt, 1971: 7.

[42] ἄγ' ὡς τάχιστα· τοῦ χρόνου δέ σοι φθονῶ. 820.

[43] Frankfurt, 1971: 8.

desire of the second order either when he wants simply to have a certain desire or when he wants a certain desire to be his will."[44]

Wanting to have certain "effective desires", a certain "will" in Frankfurt's sense, is what he regards as "essential to being a person"," and this he terms the having of "second-order volitions". An agent without second-order volitions, even one that has second-order desires, is not a 'full person'. Such entities Frankfurt calls 'wantons'. We may ask ourselves, with reference to a play like *Bacchae*, what the nature of willing and desiring is, at what level or order these take place. The maenads are not only 'wantons', they are desirers of the animal order, of pure want and spontaneous reaction[45]. Kadmos, it seems, wants to want to believe in Dionysus, but we are left with doubts concerning the nature of his motivations. He wills it and his will is effective enough to make him take up the bacchants' paraphernalia, even at risk to his social standing[46]. Kadmos wants the desire for Dionysus to be his desire, but we are left wondering if after all he is not a 'wanton' as, one may argue, he is finally charged by the god to have been[47]. Kadmos in turn implies that the god himself is guilty of a similar, too human, weakness in the face of *his own* emotions[48]. Kadmos seems to want to want Dionysus, but in his effective acts has he become a true bacchant, or merely a *narthēkophoros*, a bearer of the thyrsus, a wearer of the costume, a player of the role? His authenticity is in doubt. Would an "effective bacchant", one who is sufficiently believing, exhort in the *realpolitische* terms Kadmos does, we are left to wonder[49].

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[44] Frankfurt, 1971: 10.

[45] There are abundant images and expressions of the abandonment of individual, autonomous will and the surrender of the maenads and bacchants to a common volition that belongs to none of them, by which they belong to the owner of that will, Dionysus. They are in a state of animal thoughtlessness, which has two faces: one of purest innocence, the other of the most absolute and inhuman savagery. See the songs and the outburstsoutburst of emotion, which they are subject to, rather than subjects of: 73-86, 105-19, esp. 135-66, 378-85, 402-31, 526, 576-603, 680-768. In the climactic scene of Pentheus' sparagmos, their obedience to the command of the disembodied voice is the voluntary, not strongly willed, obedience of the dog, (the reverse of Aktaiōn's hounds, which could not heed the lost voice of their master; the master of the maenads has vanished, καὶ τὸν ξένον μὲν οὐκέτ' εἰσορᾶν παρῆν 1077, but his enigmatic voice is present, speaks from the air, ἐκ δ' αἰθέρος φωνή τις, ὡς μὲν εἰκάσαι/ Διόνυσος, ἀνεβόησεν· 1078-9). The maenads are hunting dogs (ἡ δ' ἀνεβόησεν· Ἴὼ δρομάδες ἐμαὶ κύνες, 731, ἴτε θοαὶ Λύσσας κύνες, ἴτ' εἰς ὄρος 977) with pricked ears, absolutely still, they must be commanded once more by their pack-leader, *kunēgetēs* (871), 1086-8: αἱ δ' ὡσὶν ἠχὴν οὐ σαφῶς δεδεγμέναι/ ἔστησαν ὀρθαὶ καὶ διήνεγκαν κόρας./ ὁ δ' αὖθις ἐπεκέλευσεν).

[46] 180, 205-4.

[47] 1341-7.

[48] 1348-9.

[49] 330-42. His reasoning for why Pentheus should accept Dionysus is highly utilitarian: even if this is no god, he should say so in spite of himself, "lie nicely" παρὰ σοὶ λεγέσθω· καὶ καταψεύδου καλῶς, and thereby win honour for the family in any case, 333-6. Pentheus should accept Dionysus and avoid any chance of suffering his cousin, Aktaiōn's, wretched fate. He had boasted that he was better at hunting in the mountains than Artemis, 337-40, (cf. Teiresias' admonishment to Pentheus not to "boast" that it is human agency, *dynamis*, that holds the power, 309-10). There is more to gain from the wager on Dionysus than there is to lose, according to Kadmos. But connected to this question of risk and belief as wager, cf. also the chorus' "it is light expense to believe that this has power", κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-/ ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν, 893-4 and further on this question § 4.3.4. On *narthēkophoria* see § 2.5 n. 271 in Pl. *Phd*. 69c 8 – d 2.

Teiresias and perhaps even the foreign *thiasos* are much stronger candidates as persons in this scenario, for *they* show secondary volition. They want Dionysus and they want to want Dionysus; their wills and desires are perfectly aligned. It is the difference between service and servitude: Teiresias is proud in the serving of Dionysus, τῶι Βακχίωι γὰρ τῶι Διὸς δουλευτέον 366, the bacchants are joyous conscripts in the service of the god[50]. For Pentheus, on the contrary, this is not service but the degeneracy of willing servility, and the answering of, or waiting upon, *hupēretein*, a base bidding[51]. There is nothing more unbearable than the enslavement, which Dionysus represents to him[52]; he is a man in the fashion of an heroic age, for whom the greatest virtue is strength and respect, to hold the sword over his enemy's neck[53]. For the bacchants and for Teiresias, the worship of Dionysus does not mean submission to slavery, becoming simply a fungible object in the ownership of "some foreigner"[54]. It means entering the service of a god who distributes his power and wisdom through those who desire him and desire to serve him by using his gifts[55]. He fills up those who serve him and empties out those who were servants or slaves only of their own unmastered desires.

Unlike Kadmos, Pentheus undergoes a change, involuntarily, in the structure of his will. He is not a wanton when we meet him, though he is a man full of express desires. He certainly does not want to want Dionysus, though this is what those around him all encourage him to do – to desire otherwise. Yet his desires belie themselves; he seems to find the Stranger desirable and comes to desire that which will give him pain, 814-5:

Pe. λυπρῶς νιν εἰσίδοιμ' ἂν ἐξωινωμένας[56].

[50] ὦ μάκαρ, ὅστις εὐδαί- / μων τελετὰς θεῶν . . . Διόνυσον θεραπεύει 73-4 . . . 82. Dionysus' *therapeia* "service", see 932-3. On service to gods cf. Eur. *Cyc.* 708-9 and on which Seaford, 1984: 225, Seaford on 206-9; and Wildberg, 1999/ 2000.

[51] πλήρεις δὲ θιάσοις ἐν μέσοισιν ἱστάναι/ κρατῆρας, ἄλλην δ' ἄλλος' εἰς ἐρημίαν/ πτώσσουσαν εὐναῖς ἀρσένων ὑπηρετεῖν, 221-3.

[52] τί δρῶντα; δουλεύοντα δουλείαις ἐμαῖς; 803. That is precisely what he had already been in the palace scene of his derangement, a futile striving slave, so Dionysus had narrated: ἅπας δ' ἐν ἔργωι δοῦλος ἦν, μάτην πονῶν 626.

[53] 877-80: †τί τὸ σοφόν, ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον† / παρὰ θεῶν γέρας ἐν βροτοῖς / ἢ χεῖρ' ὑπὲρ κορυφᾶς / τῶν ἐχθρῶν κρείσσω κατέχειν;

[54] ὅστις ἔστι 220, τις εἰσελήλυθε ξένος 233, ὅστις ἔστιν ὁ ξένος 247.

[55] Unlike any other god, Dionysus is said to enter the body and invest it with his beneficent powers, so mortals "fill" themselves – ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ῥοῆς 281 – with the juice of the wine, which he brought and bequeathed to them, and they receive the rest and the unconsciousness of the ills of daily life – ὕπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν κακῶν 282 – which belongs to this "festival delighting" god 278-83; the seer goes on to explain also that whenever he fills the human body "abundantly", *polus*, ὅταν γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐς τὸ σῶμ' ἔλθηι πολύς 300, he gives his own mantic power of saying "what is to be", τὸ μέλλον, to the "in-furiated" or "inspired", τοὺς μεμηνότας 300.

[56] The manuscripts read νιν 'her', the complement of which is the plural ἐξωινωμένας, Bruhn emended to μεν, and Dodds favoured this emendation. Most commentators retain νιν unproblematically. It is tempting, but perhaps tendentious, to see this in terms of the thematic confusion of one and many, a context in which "blessed is he who makes his soul a part of the bacchic *thiasos*, group, in holy purifications in the mountains", θιασεύεται ψυ-/χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ-/ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν, 75-7.

Di. ὅμως δ' ἴδοις ἂν ἡδέως ἃ σοι πικρά;[57]

Pe. It would pain me to see them drunk.
Di. Would you nevertheless like to see what you won't like?

As we saw above, discrimination begins to dissolve in him[58]. He moves in an arc from repugnance and clearly articulated reasoning of that repugnance, to the baring or undressing and re-dressing of his desires. From an optative man for whom there are different possibilities and potentials, he is reduced to a vehicle of the single purpose of an external other. Pentheus and his fate can read as a lesson in the character and failing of being a 'wanton'. He has not paused enough, has not considered how best to be and how to actualize his selected form of *aretē*.

The gnomic wisdom of the chorus of bacchants is a wisdom concerning the quality of wisdom, *gignōskein*, and of care, *meletān*[59], as they characteristically declare[60]. Thinking that a man is defined by station, gender, age, social and political role or power over others, Pentheus has not seen this fundamental, defining characteristic of a full person – a certain attendance to desires. As Frankfurt defines it:

> The essential characteristic of a wanton is that he does not care about his will. His desires move him to do certain things, without its being true of him either that he wants to be moved by those desires or that he prefers to be moved by other desires. The class of wantons includes all non-human animals that have desires and all very young children. Perhaps it also includes some adult human beings as well.[61] In any

[57] ἴδοις ἂν ἡδέως ἃ σοι πικρά: recalling that contrastive tension of the *glukupikron* "sweet-bitter", this is an evocative instance of the theme of the friction that can characterize desires, their resistance and irresistibility. It naturally suggests the 'bitter-sweet' quality of erotic desire such as is expressed in a fragment with, I find, most Dionysiac tones, Sappho fr. 130: Ἔρος δηὖτέ μ' ὁ λυσιμέλης δόνει, / γλυκύπικρον ἀμάχανον ὄρπετον.

[58] 820, and as an extended process 810-846.

[59]Power over others: 877-80. Attending to desires see § 3.3.3 on Dionysiac *melein*. Dionysus hates the man who does not attend to what is truly desirable, μισεῖ δ' ὦι μὴ ταῦτα μέλει, 424. Everyone, including his servants, advises Pentheus, ominously, to "take care", σοὶ δὲ τἄλλα χρὴ μέλειν, 450, or that he shall have this care in time, ἔτι σοι τοῦ Βρομίου μελήσει 536. There is no greater priority for a man than the right concern, rightly adjudicating what to value and attend to as a mortal.

[60] 890-2: οὐ/ γὰρ κρεῖσσόν ποτε τῶν νόμων/ γιγνώσκειν χρὴ καὶ μελετᾶν.

[61] On the related notion of "competence", see for example Giddens, 1984: 4: "The rationalization of action, within the diversity of circumstances of interaction, is the principal basis upon which the generalized 'competence' of actors is evaluated by others.". For the "competence approach" of the cognitive study of religion and ritual, an idea borrowed from Chomskian theory of grammar, see the seminal work of Lawson and McCauley, Lawson & McCauley, 1990: esp. 60-83 and further development of their pioneering cognitive approach to religion in McCauley & Lawson, 2002. A good recent application of the cognitive science of religion to Ancient Greek sources is Larsson, 2016. On the autist as "control" in establishing what "normal" agency is, see Tomasello, 1999: 56-93, esp. 76-7; Baron-Cohen, 1997.

> case, adult humans may be more or less wanton; they may act wantonly[62], in response to first-order desires concerning which they have no volitions of the second order, more or less frequently.[63]

However we characterize Pentheus, the important point, perhaps, is that by the end Thebes (and Athens) necessarily has a differentiated picture of desire and volition and a more profound and articulated understanding of the nature of fuller personhood. The object, the horizon on which agency (most fully) realizes itself, is the horizon of that most elusive of all objects for a human, one's own desires.

It is not only amongst mortals with their actions and fates that we should look, in Tragedy, for an illumination of the structure of will, an *exposé* of the nature and functioning of otherwise hidden mechanisms of desire. The god whose mission it is to expose himself reveals also divinity's deficits and, by extension, what is most desirable in human persons. Euripides' Dionysus is little concerned with rightness or goodness (although his human followers, those 'proclaimers' and 'interpreters', *prophētes*, are[64]). He has an indifference to the lives of others and to the quality of his own desires. This is not atypical for the Greek gods, whose lack in "personal depth" is something for which neither longevity nor power compensate, in the eyes of human persons. Humans are marked by their habitual moral cares and unique potential to apprehend social others as subjects too, persons *like self*.

Dionysus's actions in *Bacchae* define him as what Frankfurt called a "rational wanton". While reason is not a sufficient condition for personhood, it is a necessary condition. A wanton *may* possess reason, a person *must*[65]. The rational wanton "may employ rational faculties of a high order"," but shows no interest in the discernment of any kind of hierarchy of value in their desires: "he is not concerned with the desirability of his desires themselves. He ignores the question of what his will is to be. Not only does he pursue whatever course

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[62] See my remarks above on characters in Greek Drama as in historical reality, as acting now this way, now another. This is an important point because Tragedy does not present persons or non-persons to its audiences, but in different scenarios shows protagonists as persons, wantons and what I am calling "zombies" (rather like "all non-human animals that have desires and all very young children"). Tragedy is prescriptive in showing the effects of wanton (tyrannical, infantile, self-destructive) and zombie-like behaviour and not only privileging personhood amongst its characters but seeking to inspire a 'personal', subjective, evaluative response in its audience.

[63] Frankfurt, 1971: 11.

[64] *Prophētes*: so the bacchants characterize themselves at 550-2: ἐσορᾶις τάδ', ὦ Διὸς παῖ/ Διόνυσε, σοὺς προφήταϛ/ ἐν ἀμίλλαισιν ἀνάγκας. In the first episode, Kadmos offers his arm to Teiresias, because 'he does not see the light', and declares that he will be his "explainer", "interpreter", 210-11: ἐπεὶ σὺ φέγγος, Τειρεσία, τόδ' οὐχ ὁρᾶις, / ἐγὼ προφήτης σοι λόγων γενήσομαι.

[65] "In maintaining that the essence of being a person lies *not in reason but in will*, I am far from suggesting that a creature without reason may be a person. For it is only by virtue of his rational capacities that a person is capable of becoming critically aware of his own will and of forming volitions of the second order. *The structure of a person's will presupposes, accordingly, that he is a rational being*", (my emphases) Frankfurt, 1971: 11-2.

of action he is most strongly inclined to pursue, but he does not care which of his inclinations is strongest."[66] If *Bacchae* has seemed a riddle to critics[67], it has often been because it has been hard to accept Dionysus, so incomplete as a person, as an immortal god. This is precisely, however, what Dionysus has arrived to affirm: that he *is* a god. The divine justice so beautifully celebrated in the *Oresteia* has become the arbitrariness, the radical *libre arbitre*, of divine desire in *Bacchae*.

This is a god whose behaviour corresponds to that of the 'rational wanton'. He is inflexible – *agnamptos* – as tragic mortals are, but without the tragical consequences[68]. He will arrive in Thebes laughing and vindictive and will undergo no change, no reversal, will learn nothing, pay no price.[69] He is committed only to his desires – for face and recognition and revenge – which, he takes for granted, will be unproblematically intelligible to the human audience. His desires are primary. A certain dramatic irony may apply *to him*, in his not anticipating how problematic his intelligible behaviour and wishes may be for an audience composed of

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[66] Frankfurt, 1971: 11.

[67] See Bather, 1894; Norwood, 1908; Verrall, 1895, 1910; Nihard, 1912; Winnington-Ingram, 1948. On 'rationalist criticism of Greek Tragedy' see Ford, 2005. In contrastcontrats stand the 'ritualism' of Murray, and the somewhat positive valorization (under the influence of Freud on neurosis and suppression) of the irrational and inarticulate in Grube, 1935 and Dodds, 1929, 1960 (1944), 1951. See also Mason, 1979: "The *Bacchae* Unriddled?".

[68] Dionysus makes mortals bendy, he shows them as leaky, sticky and overflowing, this is the god of tragic poetry. The nature and meaning of Dionysus, for this *is* poetry, is expressed in many ways, and most concretely. The "bending" of purpose and desire, its "alignment" with the god's will, takes many figurations. The organic, spontaneous nature of Dionysus' worship, its liberation from the *syntax of intention* is expressed in the organic forms associatedassiciated with him, the ubiquitous wild curling hair, the abundant, uncultivated, i.e. not set in straight lines, vegetable life – he causes to run, roll and to curl or spiral: *helissein*. Dionysus makes pillars topple, upstanding houses prone, upright bodies to swing and collapse. He causes the straight lines of uniquely human agency to bend or to break, the upright – *orthos* – body to tumble or fall and move in circles, to forget purposes and the straight lines of effective cause. So evident is the identity of his purpose with organic roundness (the curlicues of Minoan art in all its delighted vitality and the Hellenic pillars wreathed in curling life-forms (form, Bernabé's remarks about ivy-decorated columns in Minoan and Mycenaean art as possibly aniconic representations of Dionysus come to mind, see in Bernabé: 32, with fig. 3.1) that he causes the upright tree, the pine, (which in *Medea* was turned to the calamitous purposes of skillful, tragic humans, Eur. *Med.* 3-5), not merely to bend to his will (ἔκαμπτεν ἐς γῆν, 1079) but even 'to become a complete circle' κυκλοῦτο, 1066: 1064-74, [for a very detailed discussion of this passage with its strange technical imagery, see Rijksbaron ad loc.]. On ivy-decorated columns, cf. the Orphic Hymn 47, to Dionysos *Perikionios*, cult title of the god at Thebes. The Scholion to Eur. *Phoen.* 651 cites Mnaseas on the myth behind this (*FGH* 3, fr.18): ἱστορεῖ γὰρ Μνασέας ὅτι τῶν Καδμείων βασιλείων κεραυνωθέντων κισσὸς περὶ τοὺς κίονας φυεὶς ἐκάλυψεν αὐτὸν, ὅπως μὴ αὐθημερὸν καὶ ἐν μηδενὶ τὸ βρέφος διαφθαρῇ [καλυφθέν κισσῷ]· διὸ καὶ περικιόνιος ὁ θεὸς ἐκλήθη παρὰ Θηβαίοις. I.e. during Semele's incineration. Aetiology for the fact that at Thebes he was worshipped as an ivy-wreathed column, on the site of the palace of Cadmus.
On the bending, *epignamptein*, of persons to purposes in Greek poetry, see Snell's telling remarks [he is discussing *Il.* 1.188-224, where Achilles feels the impulse to attack Agamemnon and must choose to act on it or not, the heart in the hero's breast is "divided in debate two ways" διάνδιχα μερμήριξεν] at Snell, 1928: 20-1 ". . . Achill steht vor einer Entscheidung. Er ist den einen Weg gekommen – plötzlich tut sich die Möglichkeit auf, abzubiegen und in anderer Richtung weiterzugehen. A diesem Punkt führt die homerische Psychologie immer ein äußeres Agens ein, un den Menschen umzustimmen – ἐπιγνάμπτειν ist ein häufiger Ausdruck dafür."

[69] This single-mindedness, an inflexible answering only to his own unbending and unexamined desires, is all expressed most plainly in the prologue 1-63, the short addresses to the audience of bacchants and spectators such as 515-8, 604-37, 848-61, 971-6 and in the epilogue 1330-51.

human persons; persons, that is, for whom judgements as to significance, worth and rightness are more important than only the correctness of transactions or the identification of facts.

Dionysus is a person in whom there are no conflicting "first-order desires" and in whom there is no secondary volition. There is in him no wish that he were constituted differently as to his will. We cannot imagine him, for example, feeling constrained by Necessity and oracles or by an insuperable pattern that compels him to vindicate divinity, or wishing things were otherwise, or wishing that he did not feel so compelled. He is a "neutral with regard to the conflict between desires"[70]. Dionysus' economy of desires is that of the wanton.

Having second-order volitions entails a potentiality, a power for differentiation and discernment in oneself that may or may not be brought into operation. It is a capacity, a not *necessarily* actualized potential. A person may submit to the relative docility or slavery of impulse and unreflective desire, or exercise the capacity for second-order volition, which will redefine them as free, as a full person, but most human lives are spent somewhere between the qualities of agency. People are a variable mix of tendencies, in turn unreflective in turn self-reflexive. Freedom is a problem. For Frankfurt it is not only the having of first-order desires and secondary volition that is constitutive of personhood, but also that freedom of will, which represents a *problem* for persons. Achilles in the *Iliad*, Agamemnon faced with the temptation of a dubious honour in the *Agamemnon*, Eteocles in Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*, Sophocles' Odysseus, Creon in *Antigone*, Agamemnon and Menelaus in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, Agamemnon confronted by Hecuba, Euripides' and Aeschylus' Orestes, Euripides' Alcestis and Admetus – their freedom, or lack thereof, will consist not in any absolute independence from external forces or wills (always illusory, in any case, in the embodied, historical world of the human context), but in the qualitative assessment they make of their desires, their manner of measuring alternatives and in their sense and construal of action and will *as problematic*. How they are to act is determined by and will determine how others will see them and how they will see themselves. Tragic agency is inseparable from the question of identity[71].

The freedom of the spectator, precisely its identity as a subject confronted with alternative modes of life between which it must judge, that is what Tragedy most powerfully expresses. This is expressed through the drama of knowledgeability, false knowledge and ignorance. There is no exculpation for the king in arguing that he was not really "confronted by alternatives" because he did not recognize any alternatives in the first place. That failure to

[70] Frankfurt, 1971: 12.

[71] For the sense in which "identity" is being employed here, see § 3.3.10.

recognize confrontation by difference is perhaps exactly what his principle failure consisted of. Pentheus misjudges because he does not know, but he also does not know because of his misjudgements. The dialectical relationship of knowledge and judgement is a central problem challenging our view of the logic of causation and responsibility in understanding the psycho-ethics of tragic protagonists. This is especially the case when spectators are given to witness protagonists who have tragically misidentified the nature of their problems. This is certainly what Euripidean Tragedy dramatizes: the quality of alternatives and their pursuit; and action and choice *qua problem*[72]. As for the 20th Century philosopher, so too for 5th Century Tragedy, person . . .

> . . . can also be construed as the concept of a type of entity for whom the freedom of its will may be a problem. This concept excludes all wantons, both infrahuman and human, since they fail to satisfy an essential condition for the enjoyment of freedom of the will. And it excludes those suprahuman beings, if any, whose wills are necessarily free.[73]

The arguments of Frankfurt and Taylor are so serviceable to the interpreter of Tragedy because they insist on the more primary kind of freedom, the freedom not to do but to wish alternatively. This is the freedom that interested the Greek poets. Human action and practical agency is impressive,[74] but also hopelessly limited and very meagre when set against the capacity of divinity. *Bacchae* is an extended juxtaposing of human incapacity against the effortless efficaciousness of the divine. One of the many ways in which this is expressed is the framing of the encounter between Pentheus and Dionysus as if, at least by the rules of a time-bound game, they were equal, contesting counterparts[75].

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[72] Resistance and Irresistibility: men are addicted to what they already know, the familiar, and to remaining how they have become through habituation, *ethismos*. *Ēthos* is not so immutable as *physis*, nature, but is similar and therefore still hard to transform, see Arist. *Eth. Nic.* 1152 a 27-33. Dionysus transforms atmosphere and *ēthos*. He breaks the spell of habituation, of the familiar and the normal, with his festive intrusions into the space-time, which is the *polis*. Thus the vital sap of the new refreshes and renews the *polis*, see Otto, 1933: 145-54. Dionysus is that vital *sap*, just as he is the juice of the bursting grape. In Plutarch is he thus called *dendritēs*, Plut. 2. 675 and *endendros* by Pindar. Pentheus is offered, asked to "receive" Dionysus, he is asked to desire the god. The god's sojourn in Thebes teaches mortals about the quality of desire and wish, which he demands from mortals. None of the reasoning or calculation (330-42); philosophical and interpretive explanation or persuasion (266-327, 787-91); passionate admonishment (358-69); impartial testimony (434-50, 769-774); miracles he himself witnesses (616-56); or Stranger's warnings (490) and offers (802), have any effect on Pentheus, because he does not know what and how to desire to know and recognize Dionysus.

[73] Frankfurt, 1971: 14.

[74] The greatest expression of the awesomeness of human agency in Tragedy, the art at the centre of which stands the habitual, human over-estimation of agency, hybris, is found in Sophocles' *Antigone* at 332-75. In Aeschylus' *Prometheus Bound* there is a remarkable account by the philanthrope Prometheus, whose gifts to humankind, have, like Dionysus', been defining for them; in certain senses Prometheus' gifts are very similar, in others they are the very opposite of Bromios', see *PD* 442-71.

[75] Demeter and her gift of bread, the dry, *is* a counterpart – ἀντίπαλον, 278 – to Dionysus and his gift of wine, the moist. Pentheus meets Dionysus and sees him like a contemptible adversary in the wrestling-ring, πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναὸς οὐ πάλης ὕπο 455. He will be

Is there any part of a person that can become other than what it has already become by habituation, or by nature always been? This is a crucial question. Could Pentheus ever have desired other than he did, was his knowledge always circumscribed by his limited subjectivity? The play has certainly been read this way by many. Nevertheless, it seems from Tragedy and from its rejuvenating, revitalizing and renewing god, this *neos theos*, that change and insight and discovery of things that we 'do not know we do not know' *are* possible. Freedom is an epistemic potentiality. Actors seem *in retrospect* to have been predetermined. Yet it is precisely that which seems most radically to limit them, which may be the source of their true liberty: time, the perspective taken on self as some property – a possession or *ktēma* – that somehow persists in the midst of passing.

If a subject begins to think of the limitations upon its alternatives, everything that constrains its freedom to act of its own pre-determined volition, it begins to look upon its future, *in prospect*, differently. It will begin to re-evaluate knowledgeability itself. One has not been entirely free in their choices, what *kind* of person is free or has some measure of autonomy? How should I re-evaluate my values to suit this existential predicament? It is the person who has first asked that question, one who recognizes that there are *kinds* of persons, different *qualities* of existence possible, and that is *eph' ēmin*, in our power. It would represent a form of nihilism to resign oneself to the impossibility of becoming a different kind of person, which we simply do not find in Greek Tragedy[76].

Pentheus *is* a certain kind of person, just the kind who did or failed to make the choices he did; he became what he *was*, it seems. But in the moment of freedom which is the present, a *kairos*, Dionysus and *Bacchae* seem to imply, a subject may *become* otherwise, may be

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called a monstrous "wrestler against" the gods, by the bacchants, ὥστε γίγαντ' ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς· 543-4. The terrible impiousness of warring against the gods is raised as terrible prospect in the play (ἀλλ' ὅμως χορευτέον, /κοὐ θεομαχήσω σῶν λόγων πεισθεὶς ὕπο 324-5; and strongly related to the inadvertent but culpable person of Pentheus: ὃς θεομαχεῖ τὰ κατ' ἐμὲ 45, πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὢν ἀνὴρ/ ἐς μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησ' 635-5, 837, ἀλλὰ θεομαχεῖν μόνον/ οἷός τ' ἐκεῖνος 1255-6. With Dionysus, here in this version of one of his myths at the very end of the Peloponnesian War, not receiving him as ally, *symmachos* 1343, in the right faith, is tantamount also to being at war against him, a god. The god is present, whether one wants to accept that or not is what will be determining. At 923 he is the kind of *symmachos* that a mortal should never have wanted, ὁ θεὸς ὁμαρτεῖ and by 1047 he is "leader" or escort in the spectacle, ξένος θ' ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας, (also πομπὸς εἶμ' ἐγὼ σωτήριος, 965). The bacchants are also his contestants, the enemies he deserves, 964: τοιγάρ σ' ἀγῶνες ἀναμένουσιν οὓς ἐχρῆν, 974-6. On *theomachein* see § 2.5 n. 273. Note that Euripides never calls Pentheus a *theomachos*, which might have suggested a deliberate choice to take a stand against divinity. He "fights against god", but out of a willful ignorance, *amathia*, not a reasoned principle or reclaimed motivation (*amathia* 480, 490; failure of *mathein* 1281, 1345: it is essentially a form of obdurately weak volition, an ignorance for which men are held responsible; see also Plato's Socrates on "willful ignorance" as the oppposite of *syneidenai,* see Fine in Inwood, 2008: 61, and Pl. *Ap. Leg.* 688c). He is the inadvertent wrestler with a *daimōn*, like the not so woeful Jacob of *Gen.* 32. 22-31. Jacob is a man more like the 'folk hero', Oedipus, [see Nilsson, 1932: 100-6] whom he resembles even in the limp, they both acquire. For the very tragic theme of learning too late cf. 1345 and Di Benedetto's remarks there and on Eur. *Elec.* 1201 ff.

[76] Except as a negative ideal, in the form of Aeschylus' Eteocles, see § 3.3.11 below.

transformed in its desires and perspectives on itself. The play is meaningful *precisely because* actions, choices and persons have the potentiality to be meaningful, to feel concern for meaning: Pentheus, like all mortals, has not only reflexes, is not simply the sum of habituations, but has the capacity – agency – to review himself, to *see* a new self, to discern a new knowledge of self *in spite* of his normal condition, *hexis*. 'Capacity' is perhaps misleading in this radically temporal situation; perhaps *opportunity* is more accurate. Pentheus is offered, from the beginning, every opportunity to choose other than he characteristically would, to loosen his grip on his established self. It is precisely the unforeseeable nature of time – underdetermined and always coming into being – which might encourage subjects to become receptive to change, to different ways of being, in recognition of their own necessary, *anagkaion*, ignorance.

What humans *can* do, the way in which they *can* be liberated is made manifest in the presence of the god of drama (present always in his theatre as well as in a fully embodied protagonist in *Bacchae*[77]). He is the god who rectifies resistance, unwillingness to himself and his double power is both to loosen volition and to deepen it. Humans can *want differently*. They can confront themselves as problematic and not automatic, frictionless executors of acts that arise out of an inscrutable, libidinal darkness. They can pause, interrupt the ongoing flow of interactions and transactions of daily life. They have the capacity to discourse, take and share counsel and reflect, exactly as Dionysus causes them to do in his theatre. They have also the negative capacity to stop reflecting and discover the meaning and limitations of reflection, through its loss. With his arrivals and interventions into the ordinary flow of time and the normal constitution of relations between persons, Dionysus may be seen also to activate this negative capacity – a danger, but also the paradoxical means by which the nature of capacity and agency takes on its depth and dimension.

The Frankfurtian freedom of the will is not a question simply of desired objects and desired deeds (or the desire 'to do what one pleases'), but the relations between desires, the will to will. The freedom of a person is freedom to ". . . want what he wants to want. More precisely, it means that he is free to will what he wants to will, or to have the will he wants."[78] Freedom of action concerns whether a given action is the one an agent wants to perform. Freedom of will properly means freedom to have the will one has.[79] This is, I believe, the more appropriate light in which to read not only *Bacchae*, but the *Oresteia*, the *Seven against Thebes,* the Oedipus plays, the *Iphigenia at Aulis* and all the debates concerning freedom and constraint explored there.

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[77] For an apparent reference to a statue of Dionysus in the theatre, see Ar. *Eq.* 536 and Paus. 1.20. 1-3.

[78] Frankfurt, 1971: 15.

[79] Frankfurt, 1971: 15.

For Frankfurt, it is in securing the conformity of will to second-order volitions that persons are free. People are seldom free: freedom is a kind of living up to a potential, a potential indissociable from knowledge and reflection, from cognitive operations repeatedly thematized in Tragedy and of principal interest in *Bacchae*, where cognitive operations are also inseparable from emotional conditions. To his credit Frankfurt does concede that there is "as much opportunity for ambivalence, conflict and self-deception with regard to desires of the second-order . . . as there is with regard to first-order desires."[80] People are complicated, caught in a permanently dynamic stream of events, desires and perspectives. Human relations and apperceptions are messy and that is the very subject of Tragedy, it is precisely what it dramatizes.

If an agent fails to identify himself properly with any of his first-order desires (becomes like a zombie and fails to make a preference that becomes his will) or with any of his second-order desires (so that he forms a desire of a still higher order, "a case of humanization run wild"[81]), his personhood is destroyed. This question of the right *identification* with oneself, with *one's own* desires, situates us squarely in the world of Dionysus. In the proximity of Dionysus the nature of relations between people becomes problematic (and also within them, between their parts, between their desires and their thoughts). Relations *qua* relations, their content, significance and nature, this is the problematic quality explored in Greek drama. A fundamental question about Pentheus and his transition in *Bacchae*, a question we do not ask about the frenzied women of Thebes and that we assume to know the answer to concerning Kadmos and Teiresias or the Tyrrhenian sailors of *Homeric Hymn* VII: is his will his own?

Who owns that property called "Pentheus"? We tend to imagine that the owner is the controller; hence who controls, we think, is the owner. A different perspective on agency may set out to review the concept of ownership. Perhaps it is not a question of whether one owns one's actions or not. Rather, remaining with this *Metaphorik* of tenure, human subjects should be seen as custodians, having a temporary lease on themselves. Pentheus' will is his own to begin with, but we see him gradually lose ownership rights over it. Dionysus takes him, volitionally and psychologically, into custody. Pentheus' "will" has been insufficiently externalized to himself, it has simply unfolded and thus he has been like a process of unfolding. He has not "done" his desiring; his desires have simply happened. An important point here is to ask what we should take from this. It is unlikely that Euripides wants his audience to think that people are slaves in the possession of their master desires and

[80] Frankfurt, 1971: 15.

[81] One may think of the case of Shakespeare's Hamlet, who for so long could not settle on which desires to identify himself with.

immoveably fixed characters. In the spectacle of a weak and weakened volition, we are being induced to re-evaluate and articulate the nature, limitations and possibilities of the relation between our own desires, choices and what we can learn, *mathein*, come to know.

He seems to start off a most "willful" man and over the course of the play's events to become estranged from himself; we are audience to his transformation into a mere "bystander to himself"[82]. From 810 until his final exit, 976 (as still intact physical person, "he" does return once more, but reduced to his decapitated head, the actor's mask), Pentheus is transformed into a *kataskopos*, "observer", "spy", a secret bystander[83]. His preparation or training for this office of undetected detective, is to try to look upon himself from outside, to borrow the eyes of another[84]. He has already come out, a man who sees the world in duplicate. Rather than seeing things 'within themselves', they are simply, as he has become, outside of themselves, the same things again rather than the unique thing with depth or new dimension[85]. He is a man driven out of himself (ἔξω δ' ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν, 853), truly a bystander; he has not understood that the show is his own life and death, his only concern is his appearance[86]; *how* he is seen and not *that* he will be seen is all that he sees[87]; and only now he "sees as he ought to, having been mentally unhealthy previously"[88]. What we witness, in other words, is two visions of a man, two kinds of person. One with a certain degree of the capacity for free willing[89], and one rendered captive to desires that he has not, would never have[90], chosen. Pentheus is estranged from his own desires by the Stranger god, the foreigner who renews and estranges, the *neos theos*.

Theories of subjectivity rooted in causal over-determination (such as predominated in the second half of the 20th Century) fail to explain "why we desire this freedom [freedom of will]

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[82] Cf. Frankfurt, 1971: 17.

[83] *Kataskopos*: 838, 916, 956, 981.

[84] How do I look? The spitting image of a bacchant, 925-7: Pe. τί φαίνομαι δῆτ'; οὐχὶ τὴν Ἰνοῦς στάσιν/ ἢ τὴν Ἀγαυῆς ἑστάναι, μητρός γ' ἐμῆς; Di. αὐτὰς ἐκείνας εἰσορᾶν δοκῶ σ' ὀρῶν.

[85] On the famous and variously interpreted hallucinations of Pentheus where he is told, 923-4, by the bystanding Stranger that finally he is seeing as he should 918-22, see p.157.

[86] 830-42, 925-6, 941-2.

[87] 960, ὤφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας· 1075, and yet just as he did not see when it counted, when it counts most for his life, he is registered but not seen by his own mother, who is not in her right mind, (in lines grimly echoing 912 and 947-8), 1122-4: ἡ δ' ἀφρὸν ἐξιεῖσα καὶ διαστρόφους/ κόρας ἐλίσσουσ', οὐ φρονοῦσ' ἃ χρὴ φρονεῖν, / ἐκ Βακχίου κατείχετ', οὐδ' ἔπειθέ νιν.

[88] 923-4: πρόσθεν ὢν οὐκ εὐμενής, / ἔνσπονδος ἡμῖν· νῦν δ' ὁρᾶις ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν. Also 947-8: τὰς δὲ πρὶν φρένας / οὐκ εἶχες ὑγιεῖς, νῦν δ' ἔχεις οἵας σε δεῖ.

[89] Thus, is he repeatedly appealed to by all those around him, as someone who simply does not know but can learn, or someone who is sick and can choose a healthier attitude.

[90] 850-53: πρῶτα δ' ἔκστησον φρενῶν, / ἐνεὶς ἐλαφρὰν λύσσαν· ὡς φρονῶν μὲν εὖ/ οὐ μὴ θελήσηι θῆλυν ἐνδῦναι στολήν, / ἔξω δ' ἐλαύνων τοῦ φρονεῖν ἐνδύσεται.

and why we refuse to ascribe it to animals"[91]. Humans "care" and humans show "preference". This fundamental fact about them is at the very heart of Tragedy and its experience, which indeed relies on the subjectivity of its audience, their inclinations and the assessment of their inclinations, their attachment to certain agents and their acts and their disinclination from others, but never their detachment. Tragedy provides the spectacle of actors, of persons rising or not to their potential for personhood, tangled in an insoluble chain of events and causes. They are *somewhat* free to have the will they want and by turns, *alternis vicibus*, sometimes apparently constrained to want as some other agent wants them to – free and not free actors. It represents a volitional and actional spectrum in which there is often a most life-like indefiniteness.

It is in constituting one's own will that one is free, according to Frankfurt. The constitution of one's will is inseparable from a certain articulacy, a certain capacity for differentiation and expression. These will form the indispensable conditions of *bouleusis.* This articulacy finds one of its most brilliant formulations and representations in one of the earliest surviving forms of poetry: the dramatic poetry of the festivals of Dionysus. It is the articulacy also which Charles Taylor, developing Frankfurt's ideas, identifies as the mark of that entity capable of the formation of second-order desires, the "agentful person".

3.3 Defining Person, Defining Agency: Charles Taylor

The essays of the philosopher, Charles Taylor, make arguments that resonate very strongly with what we find in Tragedy. The temptation is to explain in detail how that is the case and to illustrate his arguments, particularly those found in *Human Agency and Language*[92], with examples drawn from the surviving corpus of Attic Drama. Our limited space will not permit that here, but nevertheless I will sketch a few key ideas in Taylor and link them to Euripides' *Bacchae* and hope that that will suffice to encourage the interested reader to undertake further study of Taylor and enjoy the excitement of seeing the great bearing on the Dionysiac art of his subtle ideas.

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[91] Frankfurt discusses Chisholm here, but his example of the hand moved by an order from the brain strongly recalls the later, much-discussed paper of Libet, 1985 "Unconscious cerebral initiative and the role of conscious will in voluntary action", discussed by Dennett, 1991: 139-70, that apparently, and it would have been consistent with non-interest in judgements and preferences, fascinated Walter Burkert. But cf. Giddens, 1984: 65-6: on Merleau-Ponty on the body in time and "Wittgenstein's question, 'What is the difference between my raising my arm and my arm going up?'".

[92] *Human Agency and Language: philosophical papers I*. Taylor, 1985. See also his magnum opus, *Sources of the Self: The Making of the Modern Identity* (Taylor, 1992) for a wide-ranging historical, philosophical discussion of the topic so important to us here, the character of subjectivity. For a recent account of the history of the anthropological constitution of subjectivity, see Brian Morris' very useful *Anthropology and the Human Subject*, (Morris, 2014) towards a phenomenology of Tragedy, esp. 502-49; and for the question of interpretation versus explanation, "Anthropology as a Humanistic Science", 732-82.

Taylor opens this work with a discussion and further development of Frankfurt's ideas. He introduces the fundamental differentiation of "Strong and Weak Evaluations". I shall discuss this idea and its relevance to *Bacchae*, and, related to it, Taylor's notion of the articulacy and interpretiveness of agents, which, reflexively, is also constitutive of themselves as agentful persons. Closely related to these concepts are the ideas of depth, the searching for clarity and for "yardsticks" or measures; a philosophical vocabulary, the contents of which are expressed in the imagery of Tragic Drama. Taylor's notions of "import" and "import-ascription", of "subject-reference" (the subject's emotions referring to its life *qua* subject, and offering insight into what this life amounts to) and the "mattering" and reflexivity indispensable to what in Tragedy it "is to be human", have very strong bearing on what we see taking place in *Bacchae* and Tragedy generally.

Tragedy itself is agentful, and we engage with dramatic performances in the same way we engage with persons[93]. This point will find its elucidation through an engagement with Taylor's observations about language (and its role in the emotions) and the effect of questioning (and its role in constituting persons as such). Language, we might even say, is active and creative; it does not only reflect the reality of "objects" but re-organizes the very structure of will and evaluation, which define the agentful person. It gives form to the inchoate; it discriminates between desires and options as to their worthiness; it hierarchizes and poses a question "that can never be closed": τί δράσω; or as Pentheus asks, τί δρῶντα;[94] That question takes on a special richness in this work in which the immortal god, addressing mortals, utters that haunting line to which we return so often in reconsidering this strange play: οὐκ οἶσθ' ὅτι ζῇς οὐδ' ὃ δρᾷς οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ[95]. The mortal loses all effectiveness in the presence of the god of inarticulacies, a god who "will not be still, neither acted upon nor acting", 800-1.[96]

I shall begin, however, with Taylor on 'personhood' and lead into these other, intimately related, topics from there.[97] There is a common – moral and legal – notion of personhood: humans are responsible and bearers of rights. Taylor is concerned with the capacities that underline these. However damaged its capacities may be, a person has the potential (even if

[93] See on Gell, 1998 on art objects and performances as 'persons'.

[94] 803, where Pentheus expresses his intolerance of becoming "a slave to my slaves", and we may begin to see that his "slaves", who have spoken as men and not mere instruments, have been far more helpful to him than the *pathē*; we say his *pathē*, but they are passions which have owned *him*. H, e has been a slave to these all along, we may be encouraged to suspect.

[95] "You don't know what life you are living, what you are doing or even who you are" 506, see § 2.2.1.2 n. 122, (this fundamental sentiment is, typically, foreshadowed in the preceding actions and speech, e.g. Teiresias to Pentheus in the first episode, 358-9).

[96] For translations of trans. and comments on these lines see p. 91.

[97] "The concept of a person" in Taylor, 1985: 97-114.

it is sleeping, comatose) to have "a sense of self, has a notion of the future and past, can hold values, make choices; in short, can adopt life plans . . . a necessary (but not sufficient) condition [is that] . . . a person is a being with his own point of view on things."[98]. The reader of *Bacchae* may be impressed. In this optic, the play can be said to be about or to explore what a person is, what its agency is. The sense of self; the sense of time; the catastrophic loss of these senses, and that of the self as an entity *in time*, as a binding together of a past and a future; having values, the relativity of those values and their consequences; the having and losing of life plans; the losing of point of view: all are at stake, all are thematic problems of *Bacchae*.

The person is what Taylor, appropriately in a quite literal sense, for the protagonist of Tragedy, calls a 'respondent': "The life-plan, the choices, the sense of self must be attributable to him as in some sense their point of origin. A person is *a being who can be addressed, and who can reply*. Let us call a being of this kind a 'respondent'."[99] Persons are a sub-class of agents; animals carry out actions but are not respondent. The same goes of course for bacchants to whom we cannot bind choices or projects as to a personal point of origin. We find the imputing of full responsibility for Pentheus' murder to Agauē problematic, as Oedipus' guilt is problematic. Their person is not entirely theirs, but belongs to another agent, Dionysus or Apollo's oracle, contingency, *tuchē* or *anangkē*, how things had to be. There is no addressing Maenads[100]. Their non-responsiveness more deeply articulates the nature of and potentialities inherent in dialogue – stichomythia, amoiboia, and rhēsis – the bacchic mode is a musical not a dialogic mode.[101] In a Dionysiac state one has lost time, a sense of one's own virtually divisible self, lost point of view. To fall into *mania*, to become *bacchos*, may be to become either enhanced or debased; either like a god, outside of time, or to lose something that may ultimately matter as much: human personhood, this responsiveness. Humans are this special class of agents who are also respondents – that is, for Taylor, "persons".

[98] Taylor, 1985: 97.

[99] My italics, Taylor, 1985: 97.

[100] 731-47, 1118-24, 1244-64.

[101] Thumiger's discussion of time and *Bacchae* represents, I find, the most insightful pages of a really excellent study, see Thumiger, 2007: 178-6. See also Goward, 1999: 21-37, especially her very helpful distinction of the synchronic modality of the chorus, contrasting with the diachronic modality of the iambic, spoken parts.

Two Views

There are two views of persons (that correspond to the 'bifurcation' in hermeneutic approaches: objective and subjective[102]). These views will determine "two *orders* of question: scientific ones – how are we to explain human behaviour? – and practical-moral ones – what is a good/decent/acceptable form of life?"[103]. This division, which is perhaps the major theme of Taylor's work (more precisely the inadequacy of the explanatory, scientific order of inquiry), is a division that runs through the study of Greek religion and Greek Tragedy too. In the first (seventeenth-century derived) view, a person "is a being with consciousness, where consciousness is seen as a power to frame representations of things."[104] In this view the nature or quality of agency is unimportant; it is a performative criterion: "The boundary between persons and mere things is not recognized at all, and is not seen as reflecting a qualitative distinction." Here, a complex enough kind of artificial intelligence would qualify an android as being an agent[105]. Greek gods are super-natural agents, full persons in this sense, but they have a fundamental limitation in their absence of fuller reflexivity, in their under-developed, under-articulated sense of what matters to them. Dionysus, for example, seems marked by a *drive* for revenge: he travels from city to city[106], borne by the impetus of his unscrutinized nature, desirous but himself no evaluator[107].

In the second view, the one that Taylor takes as his subject, it is the nature of agency that is the focus. It is not a *performance criterion* here that counts; a mechanistic view of such beings as animals is not possible. This is not the purely externalist view judging entities by their capacity to achieve certain goals. The crux here is not the agent's ability to accomplish a *telos*, but that things *matter* to agents. If we studied Dionysus as a cultural phenomenon produced by human beings and not as a real existent, we might say that Dionysus' purposes, his desires and aversions, are not original with him but attributed by people. In just the same

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[102] See his remarks on the "significance free accounts", the "natural science model", its reductivism and the insufficiency of "faddish" sociobiology in the discussion of culture, the practices of persons, Taylor, 1985: 108-11. This is consistent with the arguments against philosophical utilitarianism of "what is human agency?" Taylor, 1985: 15-44, and very helpful to read against the 'scientist' Burkertian analysis of Greek Culture.

[103] His italics, Taylor, 1985: 98. See on this the nuanced discussion of the problem of "interpretation versus explanation in Lawson & McCauley, 1990: 12-31.

[104] Taylor, 1985: 98.

[105] Two excellent recent films (*Her*, 2013, written and directed by Spike Jonez and *Ex Machina*, 2015 written and directed by Alex Garland) have dealt in very interesting ways with the implications of high-level artificial intelligence, performing consciousness. Judging by what people (audiences and film-makers) feel is problematic about robots, it does certainly seem that moral qualities, the having problems with compulsions and not merely compulsions (instructions, drives, programmes), being evaluative and feeling that things matter are instinctively understood also by to non-philosophers as indeed the challenge in the encounter between conscious person and only consciousness.

[106] 13-22, 48-50.

[107] He has an insatiable appetite for recognition: 22, ἀλλ' ἐξ ἁπάντων βούλεται τιμὰς ἔχειν 208, τέρπεται τιμώμενος. 321, 342; and revenge: 32-42, 515-18, 848-61, 971-6, ἀλλὰ τιμωρεῖσθέ νιν. 1081.

way a machine, a robot (Hephaistos' robot, Zeus' Pandora, the "*ex tempore* hergestellte Dionysos" of the Anthesteria[108]), perhaps even a knife or axe seen as 'agentful' and responsible in a ritual killing[109], have what Taylor differentiates as "derivative . . . user-relative" purpose. Humans are the "users" of the gods. These do not have "original" purposes; their functions are imparted to them by mortals[110]. An android, for all its superior practical abilities to flesh-and-bone persons, will only have the purposes with which it had been programmed (even if that includes learning to develop "new purposes", *that too* will have to have been programmed).

Incarnate beings – animals and humans – are "subjects of original purpose". Taking seriously the difference between original and derived purposes is crucial for Taylor. The performance criterion falls away: a high operating artificial intelligence system that appears conscious cannot thereby be classed an agent, since having original purposes is a necessary condition by the second view of agency. This view "sees the agent/thing boundary as being an important and problematic one . . . offers . . . a different answer to the question, what makes a respondent? This is no longer seen in terms of consciousness but in terms of mattering itself. An agent can be a respondent, because things matter to it in an original way. What it responds out of is *the original significance of things for it*."[111] The agents in the theatre of Dionysus are the living, incarnate human beings and for these nothing is more crucial than that element in themselves which distinguishes them as living agents, who in time must succumb to transformation into inert matter. They, far more than a god like Dionysus, are the ones for whom things urgently matter and are problematic in an original way.

Characteristically, human consciousness consists in more than just the power to 'frame representations' or the having 'original purposes', by Taylor's reckoning; instead it can "be seen as what we attain when we come to formulate the significance of things for us. We then have an articulate view of our self and world. But things matter to us prior to this formulation. So original purpose cannot be confused with consciousness."[112] It is the case then, that neither original purpose nor "consciousness as representation" are what distinguish persons from animals. The two reasons Taylor gives for why this should be the case for "consciousness as representation" have to do, firstly, with the nature of

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[108] See § 6.7 n. 127.

[109] See above, p. 96.

[110] If you accept with me that the gods did not "exist" but were the *products* of Greek culture. Scholars have not always done so, even recently, Stavru on Otto in Otto, 2011 [1933]: 195-6; Bremmer in Bernabé: 4-22. This distinction is missing from Rivier's analysis and distorts his conclusions.

[111] Taylor, 1985: 99.

[112] Taylor, 1985: 100.

'formulation' and, secondly, the nature and central role for humans of 'significance'. Since I set out with the premise that Tragedy – art of the intervener, *der kommende Gott* – is not to be seen simply as a *reflection* of beliefs or practice, but as an agentful *intervention*, an active formulation and self-reflexively reformulating handling of what is most significant to its poets and their audiences, I find Taylor's highly differentiated notions of personhood in such terms, naturally, most serviceable.

Recursiveness: Knowledge redounds

The recursiveness or non-independence of formulations is essential here. The 'objective' view of persons, which privileges consciousness, typically understands consciousness as framing representations of independent objects. This independence however is illusory; it does not hold "when we look at a certain range of formulations which are crucial to human consciousness, the articulation of our human feelings" – in other words, those very *pathetic* contents of experience, which Tragedy takes for its stuff[113]. Even those who argue that Euripidean drama, for example, is a drama of ideas, must concede that it is made of characters articulating and failing to fully articulate themselves, and that this is what we are given to watch.

I wish to underline very strongly this point about the *recursiveness* (to use Gidden's term) of formulation and emotion. Even when, perhaps especially when, the protagonists have not changed or when they have failed to learn, there is always one special agent, addressed as a person by the poet, who must be modified, enlarged through drama. That is the audience, of course. Tragedy is, amongst the other things it may be, a complex formulation of values, feelings, crucial human problems. It cannot, it strives not to, leave the world constituted of persons as it is, unchanged. As Taylor puts it: "Formulating how we feel, or coming to adopt a new formulation, can frequently change how we feel. When I come to see that my feeling of guilt was false, or my feeling of love self-deluded, the *emotions themselves are different*"[114]. Seeing things again, developing a different *knowledge* of them, seeing them anew, from a new perspective, changes them and changes the seer – this in fact would be one good way to sum up a moral or point of *Bacchae* or to express Euripides' interpretation of the meaning of Dionysus and his relation to theatre. Dionysus is a most recursive god, the god of the dialectical relation, the most intervening, interlocutive and interactive of divinities. The non-independence of representation-to-self of emotions and of significance is one of those elementary ways in which subjects may be seen to be entangled, through the re-bindings of

[113] Taylor, 1985: 100.

[114] My emphasis, Taylor, 1985: 100.

language. We should not say they are entangled with themselves, but that the binding, the wovenness of consciousness *with* 'objects' of consciousness is in part constitutive of the self, the shape of persons, the structure of their wills.

Pride, shame, guilt, sense of worth, love – the elementary emotions of Tragic Drama then – each is understood or explained only through the description of situations in which these are experienced. Tragedy dramatizes these situations and 'describes' these emotions; defining them, nuancing and differentiating them, it formulates persons in predicaments of significance. Formulating these feelings is inseparable from a judgement; the judgement that they are present in, or suitably describe, a given situation: "One could say that there is a judgement integral to each one of these emotions: 'this is shameful' for shame; 'there is danger' for fear, and so on. Not that to feel the emotion is to assent to the judgement . . . It is rather that feeling the emotion in question just is being struck by, or moved by, the state of affairs the judgement describes."[115] We describe emotions by describing situations; thus do we make responses intelligible; thus do dramatic poets realize emotions, making them both intelligible and also new, in renewing the situations described. We alter our feelings in altering the situation-descriptions we accept.[116]

Knowledge concerning Knowledge

What is the object of these 'altered feelings', one may reasonably ask. If Dionysus has a lesson it is not legal or doctrinal; rather, in Euripides' treatment, it is the offer of *a knowledge concerning knowledge*. Here the difficult knowledgeability being conveyed runs something like this: just as a person is not made up of objectively demonstrable properties, but is some immaterial property, a relationship of value, so too is its highest knowledge a knowledge not of objects but a knowledge about knowledge. It is the "knowing", *sophia*, not the "knowledge", *to sophon* – the action not the object of the action or its objectification – which is most true and valuable, 395: τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία[117]. The alteration which Dionysus brings about is an alteration in relations to oneself, one's mortal life to others and in the whole perspective in what life is for, its *telos*. It is no longer self-evident, after seeing *Bacchae* and the other works Euripides wrote for performance in the Theatre of Dionysus, that acclaim, *kleos*; *timē*, honour; *ploutos*, wealth; power, *kuria* and sovereignty *turannida*; or life itself, are

[115] Taylor, 1985: 100.

[116] On this reflexivity so fundamental to our reading of drama: ". . . I can describe my emotions by describing my situation, and very often must do so really to give the flavour of what I feel. But then I alter the description of my emotions in altering the description I accept of my situation. But to alter my situation-description will be to alter my feelings, if I am moved by my newly perceived predicament." Taylor, 1985: 101. Dionysus' Theatre is an intense laboratory of just such 'newly perceived predicaments'.

[117] See also § 7.3.

absolutely valuable in and of themselves. *Bacchae* constrains the audience to a re-evaluation of values. It does not offer a new set or moral code, but suggests that the re-evaluation itself – the new valorization or knowledge concerning knowledge – an attentive *bearing* towards existence and value, is the highest value.

We alter our feelings in altering the situation-descriptions we accept: do we accept that Aeschylus' Clytemnestra is both a woman and man-like in her wrath and the execution of her revenge? Then we must accept a new more differentiated notion of women (and of manhood). Do we accept that Euripides' Medea is both unjustly treated *and* wicked? We must nuance our notion of good and wicked, of the spectrum of motivations and the extensiveness of responsibility for deeds, its distribution through the agents in a given situation. Do we think courage and manliness, are intimately connected?[118] We must reconsider when we see Alcestis' sacrifice and that of the willing Iphigenia in Euripides[119]. Are the motives of Eteocles, Odysseus or Achilles pure or tempered, even explained by somewhat compromising desires? The nature of heroism has changed in the challenge. Is the human mind, a strange alternatingly present and absent property of persons, the "most awesome" phenomenon in a universe of wonders?[120] Yet, the most mindful, strategic and cunning of men, Odysseus, is also depicted very poorly in Tragedy[121], a man lacking something of great value. We have, as a result, a deeper, more contradictory and more richly qualified sense of what we thought we valued absolutely:

> We could say that for these emotions, our understanding of them or the interpretation we accept are *constitutive* of the emotion. The understanding helps shape the emotion. And that is why the latter cannot be considered a fully independent object, and the traditional theory of consciousness as representation does not apply here.[122]

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[118] *Andreia* (or *andria*) the Greeks called it, opposing "fearfulness", *deilia,* to "manliness";", so did the Romans connect moral quality, *virtus*, with manhood. Courage and fear are degendered in *Bacchae*, one of the many ways in which Euripides (through his Dionysus) may be said to "dentaure" *nomoi*, norms and uses.

[119] In Aeschylus, she is not the pathetically willing child of Euripides' *IA*; in the *Agamemnon*, we hear that measures are put in place to prevent her potentially cursing her family and killers, before she is slaughtered, see A. *Ag*. 235-7.

[120] See § 2.2.1.1 n. 75 above on the "awesome", *deinos*, power of human cognitive agency.

[121] In Attic drama the great instrumentalist, the survivor Odysseus, is represented as shrewd but inhumanly dispassionate or unsympathetic. See, for example, *Hecuba*, *Rhesus* (where he is a familiarly shallow killer in the dark, while others around him are more suffering and marked by pathos, such as Hector, Rhesus and his mother the Muse, who curses Odysseus in her sorrow, as so many others are caused to do, Eur. *Rh.* 906-9), *Iphigenia at Aulis* (in which he does not appear, but this same character is evoked as a force in the background, which determines the choice of Agamemnon), and in Sophocles' *Philoctetes* and *Ajax*.

[122] Taylor, 1985: 101.

Concern: Subjects of Significance

Taylor's second reason for the insufficiency of consciousness and its framing of representation as a criterion for personhood is the importance for persons of significance, their 'moral agency'. In the second view (where it is the *nature* of agency that is the focus and the quality of life that is at issue, not merely the effectiveness of functions), in which an agent is understood as a "subject of significance", we are compelled to see that there are "matters of significance for human beings which are peculiarly human and have no analogue with animals"[123]. These are precisely what I am terming the "stuff" of Tragedy. We distort Tragedy when we neglect to read it in this light and seek to explain it through an even vestigially objectivist historiography. A scientific history of religious practice, for example, will have a certain prestige amongst scholars, seeming to purge the contingent human agent from its analysis, treating human persons as acting out social, historical or biological imperatives that dwarf the individual scale. Yet Tragedy is not depersonalised ritual and simply does not make sense or have any interest if "matters of significance" are not seen as the primary matter[124]. As long as we identify agency uniquely with "strategic action", and say that (a certain side of) Odysseus is what defines persons – that exemplary cunning of his, his "ability to envisage a longer time scale, to understand more complex cause-effect relationships, and thus to engage in calculations, and the like", we cannot show a qualitative, but only a quantitative, difference between humans and animals. Of course, presuming no qualitative difference is what many scholars and the generally diffused consensus in the culture today does.[125]

The reader of Tragedy must struggle with such a smoothing over of the cleft that separates humans and animals, for the humans of Attic drama possess just this quality of concern for what matters, this preoccupation with significance discussed so lucidly by Taylor[126]. Sophocles' Oedipus may not be able to escape from Necessity, from Contingency or Curse, but we can hardly escape from the primary fact about him: he is a moral man, he feels repugnance at the prospect of the unspeakable shame he is forecast, when at Corinth, to bring upon himself and his house. He wants to do the right thing, as he understands right. Clytemnestra is a powerful and intelligible person because, as we can readily understand, she knows wrong from right even as she is very comprehensibly overcome by passion.

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[123] Taylor, 1985: 101.

[124] On the subject of drama misconceived as ritual, see Scullion, 2002, a paper which goes a long way towards repairing the misconception that can arise out of focus on the ritual dimensions of Tragedy or its origins in sacrifice.

[125] Taylor, 1985: 102.

[126] On the "gap" between human and animal in *Bacchae* and as a premise giving a peculiar profile to the interpretation of culture, see § 3.2.2 n. 40 above.

Antigone is the very model of commitment to a sense of self as a moral agent for whom the mattering of things, their significance and the having of standards, is everything.

How can things matter prior to the formulation of their value? Is not the hierarchy of value co-extensive with rather than anterior to values? The dilemma is in trying to establish if language is constitutive or re-constitutive of something *original*, subsisting and prior to its different manners of being expressed. This unresolved problem is one that haunts this philosophical poetry of Euripides, for whom philosophy and truth is not the opposite of darkness and irrationality, since he is such a consummate – *teleios* – poet. The radical recursiveness of values and expressions of value comes to light near Dionysus. Language is that most puzzling of all riddles: being like an effect which has constituted its own cause. We are born into a world of culture and we are, definitively *language animals* and language is normative, *nomimon*[127]. Yet, *nomos* which is derivative, is continuously becoming – *phuein* – original, *phusikos*, over time and in time. This enigmatic recursiveness of opposites is the magic thread running through *Bacchae*. It is beautifully expressed by the chorus at 893-96[128]:

> κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-
> ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν,
> ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον,
> τό τ' ἐν χρόνωι μακρῶι νόμιμον
> ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός.
>
> Light is the expense to hold [*nomizein* "believe"]
> That it contains power,
> Whatever it is that is the divine [*daimonion*],
> And this, over the long *durée*, is upheld [*nomimon*]
> Will always be [*phusei*] and has always been [*pephukos*].

Origin, *gignesthai*, *phusis* and formulation, *nomos*: these by turns become each other. Our values, which are cultural and inextricable from tradition and habituation, are somehow prior to their (cultural) expression *and* co-extensive with that. Yet the same goes in reverse, for this is dialectical. By turns, the one is "prior", then the other. Parallel with this is the relationship between *ēthos*, the character – which has developed out of "habituation", "accustoming", *ethismos* – and *praxis*, the act which is both product and producer of *ēthos*.

[127] See also Taylor, 2016 *The Language Animal. The Full Shape of th Human Linguistic Capacity.*

[128] On these lines see also § 4.3 n. 101, § 5.5.3 n. 130 § 7.3.

3.3.1 Theban Stratagems

The problem of being strategic but not understanding how things matter, being calculatingly cautious or conniving, rather than having a more profound *sōphrosunē*, is raised in *Bacchae* with thematic force. Hera, unreflectively motivated by the passion of jealousy and anger, devised against Semelē, and Zeus was forced to counter-strategize, *antimēchanasthai*, "as a god is wont to do"[129]. The sisters of Semelē understood motivation only in terms of strategies of concealment and deception, thinking they knew too well how things "really are". They attributed their sister's pregnancy by Zeus to her promiscuity, and saw her explanation as a cover-up, which they attributed to their father Kadmos' scheming, *sophismata*, 30[130]. It is that cynical inference, the reading of their situation in terms of strategy and calculation, for which Dionysus has punished them, driven them out of their minds, effacing the very faculty for calculation and inference, which they have imprudently, viz. tragically, overestimated[131].

Kadmos, who when focalized through the perspective of his own daughters (at least in the telling of Dionysus in the prologue, 26-31), has been identified as a contriver of *sophismata*, is indeed, we shall soon discover, a man too like that Hippolytus, who famously swore only in the saying, while his heart remained, unsworn, *anōmotos*[132]. He is a man too pragmatic in his approach to Dionysus; he mis-assesses the Dionysiac worship and, symptomatically, wants to drive in a carriage to the mountain, but that, explains Teiresias, would give the god diminished honour.[133] This is a god who wants body and mind, an integrated intentionality transcending the simple pursuit of goals, negotiating of obstacles or mere performance of activities. Kadmos stands in contrast to his generational coeval Teiresias in other ways too. He thinks he ought to "magnify" Dionysus because of their family connection[134]. He does "not disdain" the gods, because he knows his place as a mortal (θνητὸς γεγώς, 199), while Teiresias very explicitly explains his own attitude, not in a manner that could be taken as the expression of judicious caution, but in terms of the very inadequacy of the mind, with its plans and circumventions, in the face of the inherited wisdom, which is a possession unassailable by *logos* or *to sophon*[135].

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[129] Hera: 9, 96-8, 288-97. Zeus' counter devising, 291-4, Ζεὺς δ' ἀντεμηχανήσαθ' οἷα δὴ θεός, 291.

[130] 26-31. *Sophismata*, "ingenious stratagems", "clever schemes" also alleged by Pentheus of Dionysus at 489.

[131] 32-42.

[132] See Eur. *Hipp.* 612, where the tongue is as if an instrument detaching, by the intentions of the "mind", *phrēn*, the subject from its objective words and their import, see similarly also *Med.* 737.

[133] 191-2: Ka. οὔκουν ὄχοισιν εἰς ὄρος περάσομεν; / Te. ἀλλ' οὐχ ὁμοίως ἄν ὁ θεὸς τιμὴν ἔχοι. See further on these lines at § 6.2.1.

[134] 182-4: δεῖ γάρ νιν ὄντα παῖδα θυγατρὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς / [Διόνυσον ὃς πέφηνεν ἀνθρώποις θεὸς] / ὅσον καθ' ἡμᾶς δυνατὸν αὔξεσθαι μέγαν.

[135] Kadmos [199-203]: οὐ καταφρονῶ 'γὼ τῶν θεῶν θνητὸς γεγώς. / οὐδὲν σοφιζόμεσθα τοῖσι δαίμοσιν. / πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνωι / κεκτήμεθ', οὐδεὶς αὐτὰ καταβαλεῖ λόγος, / οὐδ' εἰ δι' ἄκρων τὸ σοφὸν ηὕρηται φρενῶν.] "I for one, sincesonce I am mortal, do not look down on the gods. We don't use cleverness when it comes to divine beings. Our predecessors' traditions, which are

Too calculatingly does Kadmos encourage Pentheus to accept Dionysus, 330-42:

ὦ παῖ, καλῶς σοι Τειρεσίας παρήινεσεν.
οἴκει μεθ' ἡμῶν, μὴ θύραζε τῶν νόμων·
νῦν γὰρ πέτηι τε καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς.
κεἰ μὴ γὰρ ἔστιν[136] ὁ θεὸς οὗτος, ὡς σὺ φήις,
παρὰ σοὶ λεγέσθω[137]· καὶ καταψεύδου καλῶς
ὡς ἔστι Σεμέλης, ἵνα δοκῆι θεὸν τεκεῖν
ἡμῖν τε τιμὴ παντὶ τῶι γένει προσῆι.
ὁρᾶις τὸν Ἀκταίωνος ἄθλιον μόρον,
ὃν ὠμόσιτοι σκύλακες ἃς ἐθρέψατο
διεσπάσαντο, κρείσσον' ἐν κυναγίαις
Ἀρτέμιδος εἶναι κομπάσαντ' ἐν ὀργάσιν.
ὃ μὴ πάθηις σύ· δεῦρό σου στέψω κάρα
κισσῶι· μεθ' ἡμῶν τῶι θεῶι τιμὴν δίδου.

My child, Teiresias has advised you well.
Keep with us, not out of bounds of our custom;
For you are agitated at the moment and thinking nothing thoughtful.
And even if the god he isn't, as you say,
Let him be said to be a god, in your eyes; make a tidy lie of it
Say that he is Semelē's son, so that she seem to have carried a god
And there be honour attached to us and all our kind.
You see Actaeon's wretched lot,
Whom his own raw-flesh eating puppies, which he had reared,
Tore to shreds, for he had boasted that he was greater
In the hunt than Artemis,
Which fate see that you do not suffer. Come, I shall dress your head
With ivy, pay the god his honour with us.

coeval with time itself, are ours now, no *logos* [reasoning, argument, calculation] will topple these, even should it invent some science [*sophon*] through the heights of mind."

[136] κεἰ μὴ γὰρ ἔστιν: note the echo with Dionysus' dark innuendo in the prologue at 39: δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει. Rijksbaron ad loc.: "A good example of the 'scepticism'-value of εἰ + indicative, which is enhanced by the clause ὡς σὺ φήις; note the emphatic σύ."

[137] παρὰ σοὶ λεγέσθω "Let him be said to be so in your eyes, by your judgement." Rijksbaron ad loc.: "Verdenius is certainly right in rejecting the usual translations, which rest upon taking παρὰ σοὶ as referring to an agent.". For the use of παρά with the dative he refers to Kühner & Gerth's *Ausführliche Grammatik der griechischen Sprache. Satzlehre.* 1898-1904: 1, 511.

Kadmos's characterization by others, the kinds of motives he reveals for his own acceptance of Dionysus and the terms in which he seeks to motivate others, reveal a man too strategic. His strategizing approach reveals a bearing towards the world, and therefore to Dionysus, for the insufficiency of which Kadmos will suffer terribly[138]. The spirit of utilitarian *Realpolitik* we discern in Kadmos (a figure like Odysseus who has wandered across the seas, the Phoenician [wily] Kadmos will face the prospect at the end of this story of further deferment of rest, strange wanderings at the head of an army[139]) is detected in another urbane wanderer, *planēs*. The "city-slicker"[140] (τις πλάνης κατ' ἄστυ καὶ τρίβων λόγων, 717) reported by the messenger at 717-23 is an opportunist, a man decidedly of the *polis* (he addresses the shepherds, pointedly distinguishing himself with urbane courtesy, Ὦ σεμνὰς πλάκας/ναίοντες ὀρέων, 718-9), whose calculation is for profit, the king's useful "favour", *charin* (χάριν τ' ἄνακτι θώμεθ', 721),) and whose instinct is to plan, conceal and seize advantage (θάμνων δ' ἐλλοχίζομεν φόβαις/ κρύψαντες αὐτούς, 722-3).[141]

Bacchae is the predicament of estimation dramatized through the story of a god's disesteem and its tragic recoupment. It is a situation in which persons think only *others* will have to pay for their *sophismata*, contriving, and do not anticipate the punishment or fee for which they become liable through the weakness of their evaluations. Hence Pentheus tells the Stranger that *he* will have to pay the penalty for his "tricks"[142], only himself to pay the ultimate price for his own foolish plan to become a spy on the bacchants. Pentheus has thought that he could buy access – μάλιστα, μυρίον γε δοὺς χρυσοῦ σταθμόν 812 – buy an invaluable knowledge, one which stands outside of the economies of human intention. This is a knowledge beyond logical analysis or deconstruction, ineffable, impermissible to those untransformed by bacchic emotion, but "worth knowing"; for reasons, ironically, uncommunicable to those who have not first been admitted into the Dionysiac community of knowledge and affect[143]. Pentheus, Kadmos and the deranged women of Thebes show, in extreme, *dramatic*, fashion, the calamitous consequences for mortals of not having had, of gradually losing and having utterly lost, the faculty for qualitative discrimination.

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[138] 1330-80.

[139] 1330-39.

[140] Dodds' (and Seaford's) gloss on 717. The bacchants and Dionysus are 'wanderers' of a different kind, as at 148-9, where the *baccheus* is said to "excite (his) wanderers": πλανάτας ἐρεθίζων.

[141] See also chp. 3 pp. on advantage, "interest": *onēsis*. Material rewards and the weak evaluator's desire for lucre surface in *Bacchae* – 257, 812, as it does as a problem in many of Euripides' works. He is a poet centrally concerned with existence, its value and its evaluation: see Orestes' despairing questions on how to recognize value in persons at Eur. *El.* 373-9 [lines deleted by Wilamowitz, but retained by most editors].

[142] δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν. 489.

[143] ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν 472, οὐ θέμις ἀκοῦσαί σ', ἔστι δ' ἄξι' εἰδέναι 474; insusceptible to logic, impervious to science: 200-3.

In Euripides' *Iphigenia at Aulis* Agamemnon and Menelaus (and on their peripheries, Achilles and Odysseus) and the victims of their ignobly judged "self-interest" embody exactly the same problem: the danger underlying human situations of misidentification of one's own; one's own interests, one's own kin. The same can likely also be said of the *Alcmeon at Corinth*, a play which hinges on misrecognitions of kin, having what was lost and losing what was thought possessed – ownership and relation are questions of knowledge and recognition, properties that depend on ideas about them[144]. In all three of the Tragedies that Euripides presented at the Great Dionysia in 405 BCE, hybris will have consisted of a failure to adapt one's identity. And identity is seen to be permanently reconstituted through ongoing choices and decisions, which repose on what figures have identified as the most valuable or estimable identity to have. These tragically *agnamptoi* persons have failed to *bend themselves*, to Dionysus' *helix* postures, to a different vision of worth and misapprized the human situation. They have sought to bend others and their situations to their own mismeasure of reality and value.

3.3.2 Concern: Proximate and Ultimate

Humans as a kind are distinct by their concern, *meletē*[145]. They attend to themselves and the quality of their lives – "the ends which make up a human life are *sui generis*. And then even the ends of survival and reproduction will appear in a new light. What it is to maintain and hand on a human form of life, that is, a given culture, is also a peculiarly human affair."[146] And indeed there is a concern with reproduction, with the survival of the house and the continuity or non-continuity of the city at the heart of *Bacchae* as well. Forms of life, the tensions inherent in the imperative for both their renewal and their extension over time, are evident and become articulated through this very god Dionysus. In *Bacchae* we hear exhortations from the older generation to the younger to receive and maintain the *patrioi paradochai*; we see in the failure to sustain a culture, to breathe vitality into established forms, the catastrophic reduction to non-human states: to beast and to object.[147]

That things matter to Taylor's moral agent is necessarily connected with consciousness, and how we can explain the great prominence, in this ethical and pathetic art form of Tragedy, of terms for and the examination of the nature and character of knowledge. To be a moral

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[144] See Nauck[2] *TGF* Eur. frr.73-76, (frr. 78-87, from either *Alcmeon in Corinth* or *Alcmeon in Psophis*) Apollod. 3.7.7, and Hall in Stuttard: 11-28.

[145] On this "care" or "attending", see below § 3.3.3.

[146] Taylor, 1985: 102.

[147] 201-2: πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνωι/ κεκτήμεθ'.

agent is to be sensitive in a strong sense: one will follow certain standards but also "in some sense *recognize or acknowledge* the standard."[148] This is important: Dionysus requires just such a "sensitivity" from mortals, not simply that they follow certain forms or standards of behaviour, but that they authentically *recognize or acknowledge* what he means, the value of his gifts and his claims upon them. Dionysus demands to be known, he comes to be shown and seen, and if as a person he lacks a certain depth, as a phenomenon he represents a certain mode of life offered to humans, that mode of life articulated most impressively in song, by the chorus. They celebrate what matters and repudiate in song what does not matter; what bearing is best and what most destructive. They chant a Dionysiac re-orientation towards time, towards mortality and its moral implications, and towards social others. The primary requirement for the liberated personhood, envisioned in Dionysus' mode of life by the bacchants, is what Taylor has called this "strong sensitivity", a true recognition and acknowledgement of the god and the deep significance that becomes manifest through his presence.

"Some kind of consciousness", "some kind of reflexive awareness of the standards one is living by (or failing to live by)"[149] is essential to the significance of things to mortals, the fact that their lives and actions and bearing matter. This is a very great, even the greatest, part of the meaning of poetry and literature generally and of Attic Tragedy here. It is also a peculiarly important aspect of *Bacchae*. There we are both explicitly enjoined to reconsider, (*skopein* "observe", *athrein* "look", and thereby "learn!" *mathe*, which means also "take in" or "receive!" *dechou*)[150], the standards or judgements by which we are living and to understand the nature and indispensable character, in a meaningful order of existence, of consciousness and reflexivity[151]. The collapse of the maenads' minds, so powerfully narrated by messengers and so impressively dramatized in the person of Pentheus, as well as its recuperation in the case of Agauē, is a central element of the play. Consciousness discerns, makes distinctions, and there is, of course, no significance without the capacity to distinguish. And yet the Promethean agency of *krisis*, *diairesis, diarithmein*[152] is displaced in Dionysiac proximity, with the gifts of fusion, blending, the unanimity of the equivocating god: the mixing of wine as the mixing together of persons into one person, *krasis*; the fastening together of persons and of the uniforms that *show* their unity with one another, the outward signs of their inward

[148] My emphasis, Taylor, 1985: 102.

[149] Taylor, 1985: 103.

[150] So for example: σκοπεῖν χρή 317. Kadmos' words to the Agauē he is trying to bring back to lucidity, might stand as an imperative underlying much of the play: ἄθρησον αὐτὸ καὶ σαφέστερον μάθε, 1281.

[151] See esp. 877-911, where the bacchant chorus sings about the best kind of life for mortals. Also the makarismos as at 73-77, 1002-7, 1150-2. Humans need to make their judgements based on a cosmic perspective, of themselves as dying creatures in an order overshadowed by undying beings, 1325-6: εἰ δ' ἔστιν ὅστις δαιμόνων ὑπερφρονεῖ, / ἐς τοῦδ' ἀθρήσας θάνατον ἡγείσθω θεούς.

[152] See Aesch. *PV* 442-58.

binding, *sunapsis*; and their linking and yoking together in all ways *sunesis*[153]. This god does not segregate, even along the most fundamental lines of the *Lebenswelt*[154], between old and young, the preceding and succeeding generation, 206-7:

> οὐ γὰρ διήιρηχ' ὁ θεὸς οὔτε τὸν νέον
> εἰ χρὴ χορεύειν οὔτε τὸν γεραίτερον.
>
> For whether they must dance, the god
> Has not discriminated between young or old.

The paradoxical Dionysus comes surrounded by attendants who sing of matters of "ultimate concern"[155], hymning what is to be distinguished as truly valuable in life, even as he makes mortals indistinguishable, 208-9[156]. All are simply *mortals* to this god; he, *qua* immortal, wants identical reverence, *timē*, from anyone and all alike[157].

This consciousness, however, is not simply the capacity for forming representations of independent objects or the laying out of strategies. The consciousness presumed by peculiarly human concerns does not only passively register or practically strategize, but is morally creative or agentful:

> Consciousness – perhaps we might better say language – is as it were the medium within which they first arise as concerns for us. The medium here is in some way inseparable from the content; which is why as we saw above *our self-understanding in this domain is constitutive of what we feel*.[158]

If our "self-understanding in this domain is constitutive of what we feel" then not only is the enlargement and richer differentiation of our knowledge of self all the more urgent, but we

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[153] *Krasis*: Just as the head, κράς, is so important near Dionysus, it must be made prominent and dressed with wreaths, so too are his mixing bowls, *krateres*, always present (222, 687) and they wreathe human heads in sweet sleep 385. *Hapsis, sunapsis*: bacchic effects like the thyrsus and fawn-skin are 'clasped on' to the individual body to give it identity with other bodies 176; bacchants 'clasp and yoke' themselves together, 198; the fires of Dionysus 'catch', 594, 778; and Pentheus, in one of those moments in which he inadvertently utters a truth he does not comprehend, says that he 'catches, cleaves to, fastens himself' to what he deserves 594. *Sunesis*: images of such juxtaposing and linkage e.g. in the company of the Dionysiac *thiasos* hitched to the wandering god 57; the 'compact' that bacchants make 175, 707-8; and the 'holding together of houses' expressed at 392, 1309.

[154] On *Lebenswelt* see § 4.6.

[155] See Burkert, 1996: 5-8 on three characteristics of religion, one of which is its occupation with what Tillich called "ultimate concerns".

[156] See p. 105 for text and translation of these lines.

[157] The unexempting requirement of Dionysus from mortals, becomes by the end an unexempted catastrophe: τοιγὰρ συνῆψε πάντας ἐς μίαν βλάβην 1303, ὦ τέκνον, ὡς ἐς δεινὸν ἤλθομεν κακὸν/ <πάντες>, 1352-3.

[158] Taylor, 1985: 103.

may begin to see how ingenious Euripides' particular vision of Dionysus is as a model, how profound his *Bacchae* is as an illustration or exposition of the complex, recursive relationship between knowledge and affect. In this relationship language is not merely instrumental or representational. The language of drama, and by extension language in general, is seen to be – in its power of discernment and distinction, in its potential to open up persons and differentiate them, to articulate "the structure of their will" and reveal or give form to values – *creative*. If language is constitutive of personhood and agency in its fullness, we may say that language itself and this art of Tragedy realized, in large part, through language, are profoundly 'agentful'.

3.3.3 *Melein*: Dionysiac Attending

The words – 'the *sophon* is not *sophia*' – have been intoned in the first antistrophe (respondent stanza) of the first stasimon, 386-401. In the second antistrophe, the wisdom of the mind is still the theme. Dionysus is connected with a certain kind of existential attentiveness, *melein*[159]. The servant who brings the captive Dionysus before Pentheus, recommends seeing that this figure is special, *thaumatōn pleōs*, "full of wonders",[160] but as we have seen, he resigns himself to the king's authority with what will prove to be ominous words: "but this must be your concern" – *melein* – σοὶ δὲ τἄλλα χρὴ μέλειν, 450[161]. Mortals must take care to attend to Dionysus and everything he signifies. In those scenes of sensational, ironic reversal when Pentheus has emerged into sight in a female bacchant's garb, the god "is taking care to serve" the mortal: ἡμεῖς, οἷς σε θεραπεύειν μέλει, 932[162].

Melein and its nominal form *meletē,* (like *telein* and its nominal form *teletē*[163]), is dear to Dionysus, his own concern. 'Caring', 'attending' and 'intending' are of course cognitive postures that are at once also affective bearings – the union of 'heart and mind'. As we have been seeing, it is precisely in affective bearing and cognitive posture that Dionysus is *experienced* by mortals. It is these inner states and that which testifies to their authenticity and sincerity that he wants from human beings. Euripides' Dionysus wants a certain quality

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[159] *Melein*: Chantraine "sens <<être l'objet de souci>> ou <<de réflexion>> parfois avec une personne comme sujet."

[160] πολλῶν δ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ θαυμάτων ἥκει πλέως, 449.

[161] Note the echoes of this line in Dionysus' words at the climactic close of the fourth episode, 976: τἄλλα δ' αὐτὸ σημανεῖ.

[162] *Therapeia*: on service to the god and "amenability" *eutrepes*, see § 3.2.2 n. 40; Wildberg, 1999/2000.

[163] *Teletē*: usually translated as 'rites' or as in Seaford, for example, 'initiations', we may with justification render as *teletai* as 'consummations' or 'perfections'. The word derives from the verb *telein* 'complete, accomplish, perfect, end', as one sees in *telos*. What it refers to must certainly be recognized as 'religious doings', but the name suggests that the contents of those doings had to do with the processing of individuals or groups, with making them whole in a new, more perfect or finished identity in relation to each other in their social world and in relation to the undying gods. Dionysus declares that he has come to Thebes to 'institute my *teletai*', [καταστήσας ἐμὰς/ τελετάς, 21-2; cf. also 74, 238, 260, 465].

of relation with and amongst mortals. Time (that which brings recognition, whatever 'delay', *mellein*), is the greatest revealer or uncoverer of the actual constitution of things; a stream of always partial knowledge that to mortals comes tragically after the fact, too late – ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἤιδετε, 1345 – hence one does not ever really know that one has escaped disaster or that one may rightly consider oneself 'blessed', or 'happy' until one is dead[164]. The chorus equates recognizing, *gignōskein*, with attending, *meletān*, when it sings also of Time. Time is inextricable from the knowledge, always a partial knowledge, *of* time. Here is the effect of something woven or plaited, like a shining thread that variegates the dark fabric of experience, *poikilōs*; it both covers up and uncovers, is alternately seen and unseen. Time itself has the dramatic contour of knowledge and its terminally unpredictable revelations. Dionysus offers a particular, healthy bearing towards time and knowledge. Divine power, *to theion sthenos*, is certain, *piston* (882-3)[165]; it is slow to stir and they (the gods) are said to conceal in complex ways, 888-92:

κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως
δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ
θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον· οὐ
γὰρ κρεῖσσόν ποτε τῶν νόμων
γιγνώσκειν χρὴ καὶ μελετᾶν.[166]

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[164] For this cornerstone of Greek wisdom see Solon's exchange with Croesus at Hdt. 1.32 e.g. Hdt. 1.32.37-8 πρὶν δ' ἂν τελευτήσῃ, ἐπισχεῖν μηδὲ καλέειν κω ὄλβιον, ἀλλ' εὐτυχέα. Life is not done being done, until death one is subject to contingency. A mortal, a being in time, like a country, a kind of spatial identity, cannot ever "gather together", cannot be seen ever as whole object, *sullabein*: Hdt. 1.32. 38-41, cf. 5.5.3 n. 141. See also on Time as the great discloser, the revealer of the opaque and the concealed cf. Soph. *Aj.* 646-7 Ἅπανθ' ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος/ φύει τ' ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται·. As human knowledge comes late so does divine justice; long in coming, *nemesis* always comes inexorable: see Hom *Il.* 4. 160f., Solon 13. 25 ff., Eur. *Ion* 1615, ff. 223, 800, Soph *OC* 1536. See § 2.2.2 on the tragic *lateness* of human knowledge.

[165] Cf. Pi. *Nem.* 10. 54: καὶ μὰν θεῶν πιστὸν γένος.

[166] Di Benedetto ad loc. offers the very prosaic 'normatività dell' uso': "occultano gli dèi con destrezza / il lento passo del tempo / e danno la caccia a chi non li riverisca; / é bene non voler prevalere in intendimenti e atti / sulla normatività dell' uso." Roux 888-92: "Les dieux masquent par mille ruses / la lente marche du temps. / Ils font la chasse à l'impie. / Car nul ne doit jamais braver les traditions / dans ses pensers ou sa conduite." Von Armin,1931 somewhat freely but with a strong sense of the poetry of the lines: "Heimlich lauert der Rächerarm, / Langsam zaudert der Fuß der Zeit, / Endlich wird der Frevler ereilt. / Unser Denken und unser Tun / Achte des Brauches Schranke stets." For 888-90 Dodds translates: "They have crafty ways to cover the unhastening stride of time as they track the man without religion." δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα is literally "long foot of time". Dodds sees here a metaphor of the "long distance runner", as *dolichos* in Plato and *Anth. Pal.* 9. 51, but that is unnecessary, the dancer's foot is referred to several times in *Bacchae*, a light, flowing member to distinguish from the swollen feet of the plodding, talking, thinking man like Oedipus ['swollen-foot'] and Pentheus who will not dance, cf. e.g. 862-4: ἆρ' ἐν παννυχίοις χοροῖς/ θήσω ποτὲ λευκὸν/ πόδ' ἀναβακχεύουσα (the feet in *Bacchae* are the feet of running dancers, animals, coursing bacchants and simple motion: 49, 184, 647, 765, 782, 943 etc.). Note how these lines echo the choral lines in Soph. *Aj.* 646-9, referred to in § 3.3.3 n. 163. Dodds argues that the bacchants' *nomoi*, "customs", "conventions" are the same things as what Teiresias was referring to as the received wisdom referred to at 201, *patrioi paradochai*. The point he makes on 890-2 is important, in *nomoi* as in *patrioi paradochai* we may "suspect a contmeporary reference". Euripides' was an intellectual scene in which the traditional was being challenged by the new, *nomos* seta against *phusis*. Euripides himself is an author of variegated scenes: if he is somewhat revolutionary or 'modern', embracing the new in that fashion Thucydides thought characteristic of the Athenians (Thuc. 1.71.3.1-4.1, ἀνάγκη δὲ ὥσπερ τέχνης αἰεὶ τὰ ἐπιγιγνόμενα

Cover up in complex ways
The lingering foot of time and
Hunt down the unholy man, for
Nothing is ever stronger than customs [*nomoi*]
Mortals must recognize and attend to them.[167]

It is of some interest that this verb "take care", "have thought of", "have as an object of thought or interest",[168] is related to the verb *mellein*, which can simply denote the futurity of actions or events or, further, situate a perspective in relation to what was going to, or is still going to, occur, that is to say its *destiny*[169]. The Greek imagination, quite comprehensibly, associates mental states and actions with specific temporal relations. Perspective is always perspective in time and fullest cognizance is always cognizance of time and mortal time-boundedness – the entanglement of persons in perspective and relations, which are constituted in and through time. Dionysus hates those who do not pay heed, at all times, to keeping the mind "wise", *sophan*, 424-9[170]:

μισεῖ δ' ὦι μὴ ταῦτα μέλει,
κατὰ φάος νύκτας τε φίλας
εὐαίωνα διαζῆν,
†σοφὰν δ' ἀπέχειν πραπίδα φρένα τε
περισσῶν παρὰ φωτῶν†.
τὸ πλῆθος ὅτι τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-
ταί τε, τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν.

Dionysus hates that mortal, who cares nothing
for leading a good life, by day's light

κρατεῖν), he also offers many passages in which "choruses and sympathetic characters" dwell on the "ultimate validity of *nomos* and the dangers of intellectual arrogance" (Dodds ad loc.). See Eur. *Hec.* 799; *Supp.* 216 ff.; *Her.* 757 ff., 778 ff.; *IA* 1089 ff.

[167] "Stronger" for *kreisson* to echo the idea of divine strength which is sure at 883-4: πιστόν <τι> τὸ θεῖον/ σθένος. Seaford, 891-2: "For never should one think and act above the laws". On *nomoi* see also the lines at 894-9, discussed at § 4.3 n. 101, § 5.5.3 p. 231 n. 130.

[168] *LSJ*: "μέλω, Med. μέλομαι, used in both voices, either in neut. sense, to be an object of care or thought, or in act. sense, care for, take an interest in."

[169] *Mellein*: Chantraine "sens <<être destiné à, être sur le point de, avoir l'intention de>>". *Mellein* also bears the nuance, "surtout chez les trag." of 'to be late, to hesitate', so in *LSJ* "to be destined or likely to, indicating an estimated certainty or strong probability in the present, past or future… to be about to… to be always going to do without ever doing: hence, delay, put off…".

[170] Dionysiac attending, *melein,* displaces Promethean intending, Hephaistos' objects. Here care-lessness is the higher quality of care. Dionysus alone overcomes Hephaistos. Paus. 1.20.3. While Hephaistos is an inventor, making tools and traps on commission from others who have their strategies and goals clear before their eyes, Dionysus, although he is described as a "discoverer", is given to 'invention' of the musical kind, the extemporizing, inspired kind that comes as if from nowhere, having no pre-established *telos*, not looking ahead in *elpis*, issuing forth spontaneously in the moment. On *elpis* see also § 2.5 n. 249, § 3.1 p. 96, § 4.3.9 n. 182.

or by well-loved night,
†or for keeping wise heart and mind
apart from extreme men.†
Whatever the simple people consider use-
ful, this would I accept[171].

3.3.4 Looking Again

A philosophy such as Taylor's is far more fruitful for the interpreter of Attic Drama than the objective, scientific approaches of the late 20th Century (I mean especially classic structuralism and the functionalist premises that underpin ritualist interpretation). Like the sociology of Giddens, the anthropology of Gell, Hodder's theory of archaeological method and the findings of Tomasello's cognitive anthropology, it places the emphasis on human agency and the exploring of its nature (omnipresent in human culture), on consciousness and the recursive character with which consciousness invests experience. What we may conclude from the work of these scholars is a view of humans as persons, for whom value and significance are more important than anything explained by drives, functions or the practical needs of survival.[172] These approaches, which often very explicitly confront the limitations of mainstream thinking (objectivist, instrumentalist, significance-free [Taylor]; structuralist and functionalist [Giddens, Hodder, Gell]) take seriously what any anthropology of Tragedy must also start with: that we have to do with creatures that talk – with the person "self" and with others persons – and mean. Meaning and talking, understanding and clarifying, penetrating and bringing a torch to the darkness of things (or a meaningful darkness back upon the too familiar, daylit world), uncovering truths, finding ways to correspond better to the truth of things – this is not only what people and

[171] τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν: 'this would I take up', accept, receive, inherit, note the correspondence in the use of the verb *dechomai* with 'the traditions of our fathers' *patrious paradochas* evoked by Teiresias at 201.

[172] The notion of life having an absolute, inherent value rather than one contingent upon other factors – the quality of life, the idea we have of life – is raised, for example, in Euripides' *Alcestis*. Alcestis herself is heroic and noble in her self-sacrifice, though she has been fungible to the men around her, Admetus and his father Pheres come off poorly, through their all too reasonable calculationg and reasoning, Pheres' statement at *Alc.* 691 is eloquent: χαίρεις ὁρῶν φῶς· πατέρα δ' οὐ χαίρειν δοκεῖς; "You like existence [seeing the light], don't you think your father does too?", as is the entire exchange between father and son, Eur. *Alc.* 675-740. Nevertheless, compare this with the longing for the light of any kind of existence of Achilles' shade at Hom. Od. 11. 488-91. At Eur *Alc.* 802 a drunken Herakles utters the famous, very Euripidean line "Life is not really life, but a catastrophe": 802 οὐ βίος ἀληθῶς ὁ βίος ἀλλὰ συμφορά. Just as in *Bacchae* what knowledge and wisdom is is at stake and we hear sung that "science is not knowledge", τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία, 395, so too is life and the adjudgement of its value are at stake in *Alcestis*. Heracles is saying that the "solemn and overly-serious" (τοῖς γε σεμνοῖς καὶ συνωφρυωμένοις *Alc.* 800) misjudge life and what it is for. Aristophanes got mileage out of this line, easily made out to sound like nonsense, see Ar. *Ran.* 1053-5, 1478 and scholia ad loc.

protagonists spend much of their waking time doing, but what is also most important to them and how we judge them and their actions.

It is, I hope, becoming clear how useful Taylor's philosophy of agency and personhood, of humans as "self-interpreting animals" will be for the interpretation of Tragedy and, most paradigmatically, of *Bacchae* – a work in which so notoriously, when self-interpretation has fallen away, people have become beasts. Taylor provides a powerful vocabulary with which to think about subjects, their agency and their defining properties. This vocabulary finds many analogues in the imagery and lexicon of Tragedy. In the next pages I define some of this vocabulary.[173]

3.3.5 Strong and Weak Evaluations

Taylor takes up Frankfurt's notion of the evaluation of desires and their definitive character; it is "an essential feature of the mode of agency we recognize as human."[174] He sets out to differentiate Frankfurt's picture and distinguish between two different kinds of evaluation, which he designates "strong" and "weak". Weak evaluation is concerned with outcomes, strong with the quality of motivation, "with the qualitative *worth* of desires"[175]. The weak evaluator is a "weigher". She weighs up how to accommodate all their (potentially conflicting) desires, how to achieve maximum satisfaction. Kadmos is a weigher[176]. The strong evaluator takes pause, is concerned with the relative value of their desires. Teiresias and the chorus can speak and sing the language of strong evaluation: for them the concern, *melein*, is not simply with objects of desire, but with desire itself and with their situation as one envisaged in terms of the highest desires that ought to be nurtured[177].

One might say that we have here a question of accommodations: weak evaluation seeks to accommodate circumstances to desires; strong evaluation is not simply accommodating but wants to know the value of desires first, wants to accommodate itself to higher values. If desires are like strangers that seem to enter into the *polis* of the self, it is determining for the

[173] The themes in Taylor's work (Taylor, 1985) most serviceable for the reader of Tragedy are returned to thirty years later in an equally pertinent study, Taylor, 2016: *The Langauge Animal – The full Shape of the Human Linguistic Capacity.*

[174] Taylor, 1985: 16.

[175] Taylor, 1985: 16. Taylor uses many helpful examples to elucidate what I am reducing here to the abstract kernel of his arguments.

[176] On Kadmos' "weighing" see above § 3.3.5 and Taylor, 1985: 23-4.

[177] Teiresias: 266-327. Chorus: prominently, for example, at 386-401, 877-80, 997-1006.

polis how that *xenos*, that guest, will be received, *dechesthai*[178], by the host, *xenos*[179]. It is in this light that we should read the accommodating – *eutrepes* – manner of Dionysus and in which Pentheus becomes a case study in such kinds of evaluation and their implications[180].
For the reader of Greek Literature, Taylor's formulation of strong evaluation may very well ring true, as a description of the kinds of person and their concerns, which we find there. In the evaluation of qualities of desire:

> . . . our desires are classified in such categories as higher and lower, virtuous and vicious, more or less fulfilling, more and less refined, profound and superficial, noble and base. They are *judged as belonging to qualitatively different modes of life*: fragmented or integrated, alienated or free, saintly, or merely human, courageous or pusillanimous and so on.[181]

Euripides' is an ethical, philosophical dramatic-poet in whom the distinctions elaborated by Taylor in the 20th Century are anticipated[182]. The bacchant chorus in *Bacchae* will, on these terms, certainly be seen as an adjurer to strong evaluation. For them what is essential is a mode of life, one marked by the presence of certain qualities and the absence of others.[183]

What is most worthy here, is what is most desirable. What is called for is a new kind of motivation (inherited from earlier generations, traditional ergo nearly timeless). Desirability itself is recharacterized as to worth. In weak evaluation "there is 'nothing to choose' between the motivations"; they involve only, for example, choosing how to go about securing maximum pleasure, or putting off an action now in order to make another possible later. Such motivations are derived from a calculus of profit, not from consideration as to the moral value of the various actions. A weak evaluator will make a choice because 'I feel like

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[178] Receptiveness: *dechesthai* as an internal, psychological kind of "act", is significantly distinguished from the merely physical and typically ineffectual seizing, grasping and grabbing elsewhere: *lambanein*, *harpein*, and *hairein*.

[179] So much hangs on Pentheus' reception, his manner of accommodating the outsider, who is an insider, Dionysus. On Pentheus and Dionysus as host and guest see Burnett, 1970.

[180] *Eutrepes*: serviceability, amenability: 440, 844; see § 2.2.5 p. 81 n.165, § 3.3.2 p. 145 n. 49.

[181] Taylor, 1985: 16.

[182] Clement of Alexandria famously called Euripides "the philosopher of the stage" (ὁ ἐπὶ τῆς σκηνῆς φιλὸσοφος, Clem. Al. *Strom.* V 688) and note the prior Latin usage (*scaenicus philosophicus*) at Vitruvius *De Arch.* VIII *Praef.* I, of the phrase the Roman author attributed to the Athenians. Cf. Teiresias' homily in *Bacchae* of course and the cited remarks of the bacchants but also on the philosophy of law and nature Fr. 912, *Phoen.* 449-510, *Supp.* 196-213; on nature, knowledge and necessity *Tro.* 884-8; and the Pre-Socratic natural science colouring of the fragments of *Chryssipus* Fr. 836, *Antiope* Fr. 935 (*incerta*), and fr. 869 [Nauck^2 *TGF*]. ForSee also Winnington-Ingram,1969 and for a recent discussion see Dillon, 2004.

[183] See the *makarismos* of the *prosodos*, 73-87 and those important and difficult lines, 997-1007, discussed above at § 2.2.5 p. 85 n. 182, translated on p. 108.

it'; the strong evaluator because it is more worthy[184]. Here we can anticipate the articulacy which is the mark of strong evaluation and the inarticulacy of the weak form.

There is a degree of contingency in weak evaluation, which is not present in the stronger kind. Strong evaluation entails not only the presence of 'second-order desires', for one may desire to have certain desires rather than others for reasons not to do with the relative value of those desires but for unexamined motives. The necessary condition for the definition of an evaluation as strong is the distinguishing of desires as to worth. Taylor sets out two interlocking criteria:

> (1) In weak evaluation, for something to be judged good it is *sufficient that it be desired*, whereas in strong evaluation there is also *a use of 'good' or some other evaluative term* for which being desired is not sufficient; indeed some desires or desired consummations can be judged as bad, base, ignoble, trivial, superficial, unworthy, and so on. It follows this that (2) when in weak evaluation one desired alternative is set aside, it is only on grounds of its *contingent incompatibility* with a more desired alternative.[185]

By Vernant's reading of Aristotle, and crucially for his reading of Tragic agency, *boulē* 'reposes' upon *hexis*[186]. Desire may be said to 'arrive', like Dionysus, unforeseen and unbidden[187]. Desires are in persons: they arise, unpredictable and unrecognized only at our peril. When Odysseus curses his hunger, it is not because appetite is less worthy a master than self-discipline, but because it is a hindrance to the accomplishment of other goals, which in his situation are of a practical nature[188]. Desires unacknowledged and

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[184] Taylor, 1985: 17.

[185] Taylor, 1985: 18-9.

[186] See § 3.1 n. 3 and Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972: 60. This is a misprision of Aristotle. *Hexis* is not the terminal foundation of a person on which its desires "repose", for Aristotle. *Hexis* is not given as modern people may imagine DNA or the word historical global order are "*données*". *Hexis* for Aristotle is a matter of habituation, *ethismos* (see Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1098 b 4). Humans can and do take pause, review themselves and reflect also upon their habituations (*nomoi*). *Bacchae* is just such a moment of artiulate reflection upon the habituations-in-common of the *polis*, its *patrioi paradochai* or *nomoi,* what is fine because it has always been valued (ὅτι καλὸν φίλον αἰεί, 881), what people in time and over time, in their wisdom, hold to be best: τὸ πλῆθος ὅτι τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-/ταί τε, 430, 433. Vernant in effect argues that even if agents seem to choose amongst various desires, those alterantives issue from an opague origin of desire which is not chosen, ergo agency is always a kind of illusion and one that modern people misapply to Greek Theatre, which knew nothing of such modern valorizations of freedom of choice, the criterion which motivates so many assessments of the meaning of Attic drama, according to Vernant, 1972; and Rivier, 1968.

[187] 1-2: Ἥκω Διὸς παῖς τήνδε Θηβαίαν χθόνα/ Διόνυσος. On Dionysus as "der kommende Gott", see especially Otto, 1933: 74-9, borrowing (unacknowledged) Hölderlin's phrase. See Bremmer's essay on Otto in Bernabé, 4-22, and Stavru's postface to Otto 2011 [1933]. See also in Schlesier: Gödde: 85-104 and Henrichs: 105-116.

[188] Hom. *Od.* 12.340-351, 13.306-310, 15.343-345. It is not that Odysseus is *only* a weak evaluator, but this scene provides an example. One may of course argue that even when Odysseus is seen in all his calculating, value-free choosing, he is motivated by a choice as to worth, the

undistinguished as to value are very powerful; they dominate as an autocrat dominates and enslaves a population. They are opaque and ultimately inscrutable, objects in the contingent stream of phenomena; they remain independent of human intentions, undomesticated by the intentional person, θύραζε τῶν νόμων, 331. There is no manumission from desires without their articulation and distinction. The essential point however, the one that Vernant would not accept as decisive, is that humans *do* retain a power of articulacy, discernment and can renew themselves and their outlooks. They do identify themselves and their habituations, and they can submit even those desires that may arise out of opaque, unlocateable origins to discrimination. It is imprudent to say that mortals are either entirely one thing or entirely the other. An argument for the radical freedom of individual subjects is not what is being offered here. We may not choose what desires live in us, but we do choose whether or not to groom certain wishes and cut back others, to nurture them and attend to them discriminatingly and articulately - or to let our desires go to seed or run riot, take hold however they will rather than we will. On *peut* cultiver son jardin.

3.3.6 The Contrastiveness of Strong Evaluation

Strong evaluation is articulating. It is descriptive, and its descriptions distinguish desires 'contrastively'. Its incompatibilities are not adventitious, have not the contingent, opaque character of desire, but the clarity and definition derived from contrastive characterization. As Taylor says of evaluation generally, so much is the case in *Bacchae* quite specifically: "For strong evaluation deploys a language of evaluative distinctions, in which different desires are described as noble or base, integrating or fragmenting, courageous or cowardly, clairvoyant or blind, and so on."[189] The spectator of *Bacchae* is induced to be a strong evaluator, to apprehend contrastively. She is not offered a set of values that easily congeal into doctrine, without losing a dynamism essential to their meaning; not knowledge of something else, but a knowledge about this present knowledgeability itself. Revealed to her is the value of an *ad hoc readiness* for encounters and to feeling confronted by difference with all its dangers and powers of renewal; and an attitude towards perspective-taking itself and the inherent value of a certain quality of relating to mortal and immortal persons. She is induced to reflect upon its manner of knowing and the worthier objects of knowledge. She is encouraged to pause and review that which passes itself off as knowledgeable, but is only

longing for the higher mode of life that returning home to Penelope and their son represents. If Homer's characters were not the strong evaluators that they in fact are, we should find his poetry far less captivating. We relate to our kind: the one-dimensionality of the exclusively weak evaluator, belongs to such figures as the Cyclops and in certain moments of willful blindness or the depthlessness that is like having one eye, to tragic protagonists.

[189] Taylor, 1985: 19.

prejudice. The play problematizes arbitrary divine wish and weakly voluntary human wish. It reveals in what ways gods are more powerful than they are just, too human-like; and by extension how humans might behave "divinely", which means, in fact, in a manner untypical for the gods: through compassion and moral self-reflexivity. *Bacchae* stimulates a deeper sensitivity to the possibility that knowledge and value are a quality of relations; and that true *eudaimonia* – fortune and happiness – inheres not in power over others or the possession of wealth, but in a certain healthy, wholesome-minded orientation towards others and self, the passing of time and one's identity as mortal. *Bacchae* effects a re-evaluation of basic values.

The articulateness of contrastive analysis, or "diagnosis" to use Albin Lesky's perhaps more appropriate term, is common in Tragedy, and *Bacchae* is no exception in this. Antinomies expressed through a proliferation of valorized pairs of antonyms abound, and these are more helpfully seen not in terms of a binary grammar, by which the parameters of discourse find elenchic significance, nor necessarily in terms of a syllogistic structure of motion through opposites towards thesis. As in all Attic Drama, there is a proliferation of antithetical pairings in *Bacchae*. The poet is principally concerned with values. He himself attends to value and meaning, and these are articulated in many ways, but especially dramatically through their opposites, through their absence and presence. He explores and struggles with the inherent difficulty of defining, securing and preserving what is of highest value and ought therefore to be of greatest concern to his audience.

Bacchae paints a contradistinguished world on all levels. In the language of the play, as in the structure of the action, the concealed, *krupton*, is set off by the manifest, and revealed, *emphanes*[190]. The treacherous or hidden desire and what one may not know one is suffering, *dolion*, is set against declared desire, the apparently terrible or unconcealed threat, *deinon,* and the spectacular, *thaumaton*[191]. The healthy – *hygies*, *sōphrōn* – is set against the corrupt and diseased – *sathron*, *nosion*[192]. Because this is Greek Tragedy, just and unjust is an elemental distinction: *dikos* and *adikos*[193]. Freedom is set off by different forms of constraint, physical and

[190] Concealed – *krup*-: 98, 549, 723, 730, 888, 954, 955: κρύψηι σὺ κρύψιν ἥν σε κρυφθῆναι χρεών, 1109. Manifest – *phan*-: 42, 501, 992, 1006, 1011, 1199. *Emphanes*: 22, 818. *Phain*- 528, 538, 646, 1031 (but also in the sense of resemblance rather than revelation, an important accentuation: 925, 1283, and as the disingenuous expression of a judgement by the god at 629). *Deik*-: 47, 50.

[191] *Dolion*: 407, 885, 956. *Deinon* unconcealed threat: 246, 492, 642: πέπονθα δεινά, 667: ὡς δεινὰ δρῶσι θαυμάτων τε κρείσσονα, 674, [716], 760: οὖπερ τὸ δεινὸν ἦν θέαμ' ἰδεῖν, ἄναξ, 856: ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρὶν αἶσι δεινὸς ἦν, 861, 971: δεινὸς σὺ δεινὸς κἀπὶ δείν' ἔρχηι πάθη, 1260, 1352, 1374, 1377. *Thaumaton*: 449-50: πολλῶν δ' ὅδ' ἀνὴρ θαυμάτων ἥκει πλέως / ἐς τάσδε Θήβας. 667, [716]. *Deinon* and *thaumaton* are strongly associated with real recognition in contrast not simply to non-recognition, but false recognition.

[192] *Hygies*: 262, 948. *Nosion*: 311, 327, 353, 1060. *Sathron*: 487: τοῦτ' ἐς γυναῖκας δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν.

[193] *Dikon*: 1011, 1249. The ransom that must be paid for justice, *dikē*, is prominent: 346, 356, 489, 676, 793, 847, 1010, 1312, 1327. *Adikon*: 518, 995, 997, 1015, 1041-2: τίνι μόρωι θνήισκει / ἄδικος ἄδικά τ' ἐκπορίζων ἀνήρ; 1320, 1322, 1344.

non-physical[194]. The mark of free people and a just social order, free speaking and frankness, *eleutheroi logoi*, *parrhēsia,* is set against falsification and meaning that stands in only oblique relation to form, *kibdēleuein*, *parocheteuein*[195]. The counterfeit is opposed to the authentic as a tension or problem of quite determining importance[196]. Dry is set against wet, and the daily against the sabbatical, *Brot* against *Wein*[197]. The unestablished and exotic is set against the familiar and normative[198].

The ethical dimension expressing itself through an evaluative contrastiveness is only the more forcefully expressed through the simultaneous presentation of the collapsing of contrasts or values. The normal, accepted contrasts come, in this situation of problematized and re-articulated meaningfulness, not to *matter.* Hence, "the god does not discriminate", οὐ γὰρ διήιρηχ' ὁ θεὸς, 206: young and old[199]; men and women[200]; the new with the known; indigenous and foreign; the house and the wild; the foreign and the familiar: these are not simply juxtaposed but become infused with one another, integrated through Dionysus the man-god hybrid. The Dionysiac summons is a call to come out of the domestic, familiar world, out into the familiar (but not intimate) city streets and further on – εἰς ὄρος εἰς ὄρος, 116 – to the wild and unfamiliar mountains, 68-9[201]:

τίς ὁδῶι, τίς ὁδῶι; τίς
μελάθροις; ἔκτοπος ἔστω,

[194] Freedom and Constraint: *passim* but most dramatically at 604-59. See also the fantasies of utopian freedom and bliss sung by the bacchants at 402-31.

[195] Frank speech: 668, 775. Evasive speech: 475, 479.

[196] Counterfeit and Authentic: this antinomy has been discussed in some detail above at 24 n. 147. Perhaps it is worth mentioning here that there is a very vivid and effective contrast running between form, *morphē,* and flesh, *ōmos*. *Morphē* is falsifiable, reconstituteable and fungible: 4, 54, 917, 1388; also 353, 855. Flesh is spectacularly not so. Once disarticulated, the human body cannot be reassembled, 1125-43, 1216-43. The god's is an internal identity that must be externalised, *shown* in various forms, but he is not only any one of those given shapes; none have primacy. That is to say that "he" is something as spiritual and hard to pin down as "mind", which masks itself, simultaneously hides and reveals itself in its forms, chosen and unchosen. In effect the play becomes a description of the strange property of persons, which we may come to regard as what they *really* are.

[197] Demeter and Dionysus: 274-85. Hölderlin accents this antinomy in his *Brot und Wein*, 1800.

[198] Establishing and instituting: *katastēsis*: 20-2: ἐς τήνδε πρώτην ἦλθον Ἑλλήνων πόλιν,/ τἀκεῖ χορεύσας καὶ καταστήσας ἐμὰς/ τελετάς, ἵν' εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς., *kathidruein*: 1339; *Eisagein*: 260. Foreign: *Barbaron*: 18, 56, 407, 482, 604, 1034, 1334, 1356. *Neon*: see p. n. Normal and indigenous: *Ta nomisthenta*: 71, 430-1. *Nomos* is expressed in its absence or deviance: 387, 484, 995, 1015. And, of course, the customs that Teiresias beseeches Pentheus to accept only look foreign; they are in fact long established by the usage of forebears: πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἃς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνωι/ κεκτήμεθ', 201-2.

[199]34-6: σκευήν τ' ἔχειν ἠνάγκασ' ὀργίων ἐμῶν. / καὶ πᾶν τὸ θῆλυ σπέρμα Καδμείων, ὅσαι / γυναῖκες ἦσαν, ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων·, 187-90, 206-9.

[200] Dionysus himself will become associated, partly because of the powerful influence of *Bacchae*, with the proximity of male and female, so of course, in Pentheus' eyes, τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, but cf. also *Orph. Hym*. 42.4 ἄρσενα καὶ θῆλυν, διφυῆ, λύσειον Ἴακχον. Διφυῆ, he has "two natures" again at *Orph. Hym*. 30.2. So in Diodorus Siculus was he called *dimorphos*, Diod. Sic. 4.5.2.8 - 4.5.3, see § 4.3.7 n. 915.

[201] So too does Teiresias summon Kadmos to come out of the domestic environment into the public world in the opening of the first episode, and Kadmos is "ready", 170-80.

Who is in the street, who
in the house? Let him be outside,[202]

Some differences are smoothed out, while what counts in this *diacritical* world (where that first segregation of mortal and immortal at Mekonē comes so readily to mind[203]) are other kinds of distinctions: health and sickness of judgement; moderation and excess; vision and blindness; reflexivity and self-forgetting; the articulacy and inarticulacy of wishing; a humble, open porousness or an aporetic, impossible, hybristic sealing-off of the self as if *eine geschlossene Einheit*, "a closed up Unit"[204].

In *Bacchae* we hear a great deal about that which one must and must not do – mortal existence is circumscribed by obligations, ties of service. "Why should I dance?" the chorus famously asked in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannos*, "if such things are honoured, *timiai*"[205]. In *Bacchae* dancing is one of the things that mortals, *chrē*, "must do", χρὴ χορεύειν 207, 184, χορευτέον 324, and in the right way, 943-4. Greek *dei* is like the now uncommon English usage of "want" signifying 'lack' and therefore 'require', 'need', 'ought to have' as in, "That William, he *wants* a good hiding!"[206]. Thebes "wants to learn thoroughly, even if she does not wish to", explains Dionysus from the outset, as we have seen[207]. This contrast of 'ought', 'must' and 'ought not', 'must not'; of 'ought to want' and 'ought not to want', runs like a faultline through *Bacchae*.

One *must* also "look closely", σκοπεῖν χρή 317, "take care" χρὴ μέλειν 450, 890-2. Some must take and others must pay, some must suffer and others must act[208]. All is determined by whether they have met the obligation (imposed on mortals by immortals, or more precisely,

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[202] *Ektopos*: means also eccentric, strange, foreign. These words could contain a subtext running something like, 'let him become estranged, unfamiliar' and that would be an instance of the important antithesis here to the *domestic*, the familiar, mundane space of the *oikos*.

[203] Hes. *Theog.* 535-6.

[204] Snell, 1928: 20-1 on Homeric figures.

[205] Soph. *OT* 895-6: Εἰ γὰρ αἱ τοιαίδε πράξεις τίμιαι, / τί δεῖ με χορεύειν; See Henrichs, 1994, an important essay on choral self-referentiality. In *Bacchae* the questions are how should I dance, where should I dance, should I want to dance. It is not "what should I do?", but "how should I want to do?". Dancing, which looks ridiculous to the outsider who does not want to enter the spirit of dancing and feel the rhythm of music, is a mysterious thing to do with the body and to do with others. It involves, even depends on, the relaxation of self-awareness and of purposiveness, for its only purpose its own doing. It looks like the dissipation of the will, a being enchained to the command of music and a loss of autonomy to the unanimity of the dancing group, it can look like a kind of zombification, a turning of persons into robots, and yet that all depends on the manner of looking. How we look upon things depends on how we wish to look upon things, volition is inseperable from Dionysiac perspective. What seems robotic, faceless and shameless to Pentheus with *his reflex* reactions to things, is celebrated in *Bacchae* as divine, organic and an apparent loss of self that incurs a deeper quality of identity.

[206] On the loose, broad connotation of *thelein, ethelein* see § 2.5 n. 248.

[207] δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, 39. See § 2.2.3.

[208] δίκην σε δοῦναι δεῖ σοφισμάτων κακῶν 489, εἴφ' ὅτι παθεῖν δεῖ· 492.

imposed by the condition of mortality) to "want" as one should, because the *polis* "wants the right wanting", so to speak. There is a way of seeing and judging what one "must", and this stands in sharp contradistinction with the manifest ways in which one "must not"[209]. There are things one ought not to do, which, of course, one does, simply because one has not learnt or known how and what to want better[210]. How humans ought to have acted, been and felt: this is what they ought to have known and did not until it was too late[211]. What Dionysus *craves* (*chrēzein*: a strong form of desiring – χρήιζω 85) is what mortals must: the fastening threads of relation are the bindings of obligation. These hold mortal and immortal together in this mutuality, this reciprocity of a service which is compelled but beneficial, or resisted and deleterious; either most terrible or most sweet for human beings: δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος 861.

Purity and the pure is praised[212] and dramatically contrasted with the impurity of the central protagonist[213]. Sanity and healthy thinking – *euphronein*, *sōphroneien* – are constantly evoked and contrasted with their highly undesirable and unserviceable antitheses: thinking that is unwell, οὐκ εὖ φρονεῖν 480. A mind which cannot recognize what it is, cannot diagnose its own misdiagnosing, φρονεῖν δόκει τι 311-2; the thoughts that no mortal ought to think τό τε μὴ θνατὰ φρονεῖν 396[214]. *Sebein*, "awe" before the gods[215], is evoked, as is its absence or opposite, *asebein*[216]. A healthy, whole-mindedness is one that feels due "terror"; hence

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[209] νῦν δ' ὁρᾶις ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν, 924; οὐ φρονοῦσ' ἃ χρὴ φρονεῖν, 1123.

[210] μολεῖν χρὴ πρῶτον ἐς κατασκοπήν, 838.

[211] ὄψ' ἐμάθεθ' ἡμᾶς, ὅτε δ' ἐχρῆν οὐκ ἴιδετε 1345. See p. 57 n. 57 and p. 114.

[212] 370-3: Ὁσία πότνα θεῶν, / Ὁσία δ' ἃ κατὰ γᾶν / χρυσέαι πτέρυγι φέρηι, / τάδε Πενθέως ἀίεις; Dionysus' pure and purifying practices (76-7, 114) are contrasted with human hybris (374-5, see following ftft.), which has been preoccupied itself with purity and impurity of intent, but through a calamitously misidentified contrast. Here see notably λυμαίνεται "cleanse from dirt" or "outrage", "maltreat", "ruin". A usefully confusing homonym exploited by Euripides to sharpen the significance of sharply contrasted focalizations. Pentheus sees Dionysus as "corrupting" the beds of the women of Thebes 353-4: ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον / καινὴν γυναιξὶ καὶ λέχη λυμαίνεται. Dionysus or "Bacchios" ruins (or does he cleanse, or is it cleanses the house through ruination) at 632-6, (πρὸς δὲ τοῖσδ' αὐτῶι τάδ' ἄλλα Βάκχιος λυμαίνεται, 632). Most commentators have not made much of the ambiguity of λυμαίνεται. See Di Benedetto on 632: "L'uso del verbo λυμαίνεται ha qualcosa di crudo…". Gónzalez Merino ad loc.: λυμαίνεται "le hace escarnio . . . Observese la paronomasia latente λυμαίνεται / (μαίνεται, 'enloquece')."

[213] ἀίεις οὐχ ὁσίαν / ὕβριν ἐς τὸν Βρόμιον, 374-5, ἀνδρὸς ἀνοσίου τυχών, 613.

[214] Cf. Eur. *Alc.* 799 ὄντας δὲ θνητοὺς θνητὰ καὶ φρονεῖν χρεών·.

[215] "Piety", "reverence", the word expresses an affective state or bearing, not to be confused with the 'piety', which in English can also suggest the falsifiable, formulaic religiosity of the sanctimonoious; in *sebos* there is nothing pejorative, only a "terror" in the face of the numinous, which modern people may struggle to understand or appreciate. Note the cognate *semnos* "solemn, holy", which is what the night possesses σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος, 486; the mountains 411; and the fire which appears when Dionysus in human form vanishes, φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός, 1083 are to Dionysus and his bacchants. The mountain plateau is "sacred" also to the "smooth talker", who however, we may suspect, is adapting his speech to the desires of his hearers, his is the calculation and rhetorical know-how of the city-dweller, 718. See Musurillo, 1966 on piety in *Bacchae*. See Nilsson, 1969 and Mikalson on piety in Greek Tragedy, Mikalson, 1991 *Honor Thy Gods: Popular Religion in Greek Tragedy*, esp. 147-52.

[216] "Blessed is the one who feels awe", sing the bacchants, 565-6: μάκαρ ὦ Πιερία, / σέβεταί σ' Εὔιος,. "Revere him", "feel the fear in his presence" ὁ Διόνυσος ἀνὰ μέλαθρα·/ σέβετέ νιν, 589-90. His *orgia* "hate the man who practises irreverence, *asebeia*" says the disguised,

"*Sōphronein* and *sebein* of that which is divine [belongs to the gods] is the most beautiful thing", 1150-1: τὸ σωφρονεῖν δὲ καὶ σέβειν τὰ τῶν θεῶν/κάλλιστον.

"The most beautiful thing" finds its *antipalos,* its opposite or adversary, in *to aischron*, the "ignoble, shameful, base, disgraceful". *Bacchae* represents a contest over the very definition of these contrasted values: "What is the wise, what more noble?" sing the bacchants at 877, 897: †τί τὸ σοφόν, ἢ τί τὸ κάλλιον†[217]. The action is a struggle over the meanings and interpretations of acts and motives. Meaning is articulated through a kind of chiasmus of contrasted values, misidentified as their very opposites, organized on the axis of the problem of authenticity, judgement and recognition, viz. evaluation. The drama reveals that what Pentheus has called "specious" and "fabricated", *plastos*; desires he thought really incited by "counterfeiture" *kibdēleuein*; practices he thought only "pretext" *prophasis*[218]; what he has thought *kalliston* in appearance but *aischron* in reality – μαινάδων αἰσχρουργίαν[219] – are all in fact the very reverse. What he has alleged was really trumped-up, covered up, disguised abjectness – the *aischron* made desirable by the baiting, alluring force of the *dolion*[220] – are ultimately revealed in fact to have been *kalliston*. Thus does Pentheus think that the night is a cloak, inciting permissiveness[221]. To that claim Dionysus' riposte is that one can "find out the *aischron*" by daylight too, demonstrating a much more agentful conception of how it is that the base comes about: by choices, not only by disinhibition[222]. This is a situation envisaged thoroughly in terms of value, in terms of what is noble and what ignoble, the desirable and undesirable - and their confusion, non-recognition or disastrous misjudgement.

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smiling Dionysus (a laughing deity who, it may be said, makes mortals irreverent in the right way) at 476: ἀσέβειαν ἀσκοῦντ' ὄργι' ἐχθαίρει θεοῦ. Pentheus is too much like his mother, the bacchant under retributive divine compulsion; they felt no awe for the god, 1302: ὑμῖν ἐγένεθ' ὅμοιος, οὐ σέβων θεόν. On *sebein* see § 3.1 n. 10; on *asebeia* see § 2.2.5 p. 86 n. 184.

[217] 877, 897: Thus reads the text of manuscript P. It is a problematic line, Diggle: nec de sensu nec de numeris constat. The second τὸ is helpfully deleted by most editors, since Paley (Dodds p. 188 "The solution, however, is not, I think, to alter ἢ but to delete the article before κάλλιον. As Paley saw, this improves the metre as well as the Greek." See Rijksbaron's (pp. 109-13) extensive discussion of the textual problems with this line, which cites and assesses the relative value of the various editorial propositions. Note Dodds' remarks ad loc.: "'What is wisdom?' The Chorus do not stay for an answer, but seek one indirectly by asking a second and easier question. 'Or what god-given right is more honourable in the sight of men than to keep the hand of mastery over the head of a foe?'" Answering questions with further questions in thoroughly in keeping with the Stranger and the Dionysiac mode he represents. Dionysus does not bring answers, doctrines or ideas but the opening up of persons and questioning, this open-ended orientation, is the peeling away whose goal is its self, with Dionysus.

[218] *Plastos*: 218; *kibdēleuein:* 475; *prophasis:* 224.

[219] 1062.

[220] Further on *dolos* the concrete sense of which is "bait", "lure" i.e. a device for making the undesirable seem desirable, see § 4.2.2.

[221] The "agency" of darkness, consisting in its removing of any inhibiting agency in human social life; persons [women] in Pentheus' eyes are passive, *patients* of their own impulses.

[222] 486-7: Di. νύκτωρ τὰ πολλά· σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος./ Pe. τοῦτ' ἐς γυναῖκας δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν./ Di. κὰν ἡμέραι τό γ' αἰσχρὸν ἐξεύροι τις ἄν.

It is noteworthy how value is expressed also through the valorized, physical contrast of upright/fallen. The "eccentric posture" of humans[223], by which they stand upright and face-to-face, which gives their social inter-subjective life and its encounters the peculiar character that it has, is the necessary condition for the establishment and perpetual re-establishment of an order of values[224]. To be *hyperochos* or *exochos* "outstanding", pre-eminent amongst peers, is a concept in Homer inseparable from being *aristos*, "the best"[225]. In *Iliad* we see how strongly excellence is associated with and defined through pre-eminence. So, for example, Thetis, a choryphaeus amongst the Nereids, sings of her excellent son Achilles "standing out among heroes"[226]. The nightmare of the Homeric hero is to be prone on the ground, horizontal, scattered matter, formless, undefined, and thereby the very epitome of the valueless[227]. In *Bacchae* too the finest, the most beautiful kind of life is counterpoised against Pentheus' quality of life and most abject death - *αἴσχιστα καὶ κάκιστα κατθανόνθ'*, 1307[228]. He has stood out above all others as king and delighted in being honoured and magnified[229]. In his contest with the god who tolerates no mortal standing out, who himself delights in being pre-eminent alone[230], Pentheus will ultimately be atrociously laid-low[231]. Brought down, below even the suppliant's level of the knees, he will become as reduced as a mortal can be:

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[223] Eccentric posture: Giddens, 1984: 66-7: "The body, of course, is not an undifferentiated unity. What Gehlen calls the 'eccentric' posture of human beings – standing upright and 'outward' towards the world – is no doubt the result of biological evolution. We need not transpose biological into a presumptively parallel form of social evolution to see the implications of this for human social processes in circumstances of co-presence."

[224] For the many – positively valorized, ironically shaded – references to *orthos, orthia, orthōs,* "uprightness" and "setting right", as making "upright" see: 693, 933, 938, 1062, 1070-4 [occuring three times], 1087. Even the common adverbial usage denoting "correctly", "rightly so", like German "gerade", takes on a peculiar weight in this context in which this contrast is so operative, 838, 1279.

[225] See *Il.* 6. 208, 11.784: αἰὲν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων.

[226] ἔξοχος ἡρώων Hom. *Il.*18.56. The deluded Agauē will tell Kadmos that he can boast the most excellent daughters, and she herself of all most outstanding, 1233-5: πάτερ, μέγιστον κομπάσαι πάρεστί σοι, / πάντων ἀρίστας θυγατέρας σπεῖραι μακρῶι/ θνητῶν· ἁπάσας εἶπον, ἐξόχως δ' ἐμέ.

[227] αὐτοὺς δὲ ἑλώρια τεῦχε κύνεσσιν / οἰωνοῖσί τε πᾶσι Hom. *Il* 1. 4-5.

[228] Note that Teiresias, seer in this city once held captive by a sub-human monster, marked by its non-upright posture but human face, which had riddlingly required humans to define themselves by phases of uprightness and proneness, has told Kadmos to help him walk, for "to fall down [would be] shameful" for the two old men: γέροντε δ' αἰσχρὸν δύο πεσεῖν· 365. Contrast the delirious falling down of the bacchants in their states of greatest excitement when they become most savage, four-legged beings delighting in the eating of raw flesh, 135-9: ἡδὺς ἐν ὄρεσσιν ὅταν/ ἐκ θιάσων δρομαίων/ πέσηι πεδόσε, νεβρίδος ἔχων/ ἱερὸν ἐνδυτόν, ἀγρεύων/ αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν. Cf. *TGF* Nauck[2] Eur. Fr. 472 from *Cretans* 9-15, for the nocturnal rites of Dionysus-Zagreus, with "feasts of raw-flesh eating". On "omophagia", see Detienne, 1977; Burkert, 2011.

[229] 319-21: σὺ χαίρεις, ὅταν ἐφεστῶσιν πύλαις/ πολλοί, τὸ Πενθέως δ' ὄνομα μεγαλύνηι πόλις·/ κἀκεῖνος, οἶμαι, τέρπεται τιμώμενος. On this image, cf. the closely resembling portrait of his hybristic brother sketched by Menelaus at Eur. *IA* 335-48; see also *IA* 16-27, *Med.* 119-30 on the unenviable estate of the powerful.

[230] 206-9, see § 4.2.1 n. 36.

[231] Here in *Bacchae* as in other works of Euripides, the wisdom of the ordinary people (see p. 197 below) stands in contrast to the hybris of kingly families, just as the happy, peaceful and blessed life is typically aligned with the common people and the recognizing of ordinary gifts and woe against the distress, utter impoverishment and bereavement of the powerful (on this Seaford, 1994 *Reciprocity and Ritual* is of notable interest). See, for example: τὸ πλῆθος ὅτι τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-/ταί τε, τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν, 430-1; also *Med.* 119-30.

spread out on the ground, like the houses of Kadmos reduced to rubble[232]. The physical contrast is absolute; it is the embodiment of an ethical antithesis. The most extreme abjectness for a human being, the becoming only object, and still lower than that, mere matter, like the body of Hector if it had never been redeemed by Priam[233] – this is the woeful fate of the man of woe, *penthos*, Pentheus.

From the contrast mortal/immortal issue all manner of consequences. Thrasonical Actaeon (337-40), Pentheus (226-32), Agauē (who resembles Actaeon in the boasting over her dreadful hunting trophy, 1233-7)[234] all have failed in not thinking or feeling as befits a creature that must die[235]. *Thnēton* /*Athnēton* is the definitive cleft in the cosmos, expressing itself through ramifying fissures; the divisions between the healthy and unhealthy, the wholesome and unwholesome, disease and health, *nosos* and *hygies*. Pentheus alleges that the foreign stranger has come to ruin the beds of Theban women, that he comes to infect, to introduce his disease – *nosos* – an epidemic, not a cure for madness, ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον, 353[236]. He is himself responding to Teiresias' claims that it is *he*, Pentheus, who is the sick one, and it is a sickness which attacks the very faculties of diagnosis, by which the king attributes power to human agency, not understanding that it is his impaired capacity for understanding alone that makes him think so, 309-12[237].

Pentheus is suffering from a most grievous disorder for which Dionysus is the only remedy, *akē*, 326-7:

> μαίνηι γὰρ ὡς ἄλγιστα, κοὔτε φαρμάκοις
> ἄκη λάβοις ἂν οὔτ' ἄνευ τούτων νόσου.

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[232] Semelē was laid low by a Zeus thunderbolt and the machinations of Hera behind that strike. All that remains of her reduced house are the rubble, *ereipia* (6-9) and the flame that stands on it (8-9) and dances and flares up at heightened moments (594-5, 622-6). The earthquake, Dionysus' prodigy, brings down columns and roofs and even the bacchants bodies are toppled edifices, falling on the ground (575-607).

[233] Or preserved from mutilation by Apollo, see Hom. *Il.* 24. 18 ff.

[234] πάτερ, μέγιστον κομπάσαι πάρεστί σοι, 1233.

[235] *Thnēton* is not an incidental feature of humans; it is evoked consistently in relation to that fundamental question of identity, above all by Dionysus: 28, 42, 53, 1332, 1340 and 795, where it is used in a warning to Pentheus that he fails to heed. It is a mark of the knowledgeability of the "common people" (whose judgements are also praised by the bacchants at 430-1), that they are sensitive to this determining quality of mortality and therefore the presence of its opposite; hence the servants and messengers at 448, 1069, 1152. Kadmos 199 and, of course, Teiresias 280, articulate themselves through this definition, which Pentheus never does. Cf. Eur. fr. 76 from the *Alcmeon in Corinth* performed alongside *Bacchae*, where the very Kadmos-like figure of an old king now sent childless into exile seems to have made the mistake of thinking thoughts inappropriate to a mortal, *thnēton*: ὁρᾶτε τὸν τύραννον ὡς ἅπαις γέρων/ φεύγει· φρονεῖν δὲ θνητὸν ὄντ' οὐ χρὴ μέγα.

[236] For his fear of 'infection', see also 343-4 and his view of bacchic worship as the "disease of the maenads" right up to the very end, 1059-60: Ὦ ξέν', οὗ μὲν ἕσταμεν/ οὐκ ἐξικνοῦμαι μανιάδων ὅσσοις νόσων, (an instance that shows how his "light madness" has been a dosage administered by the god, which is strong enough to make him lose all shame but too weak to really have changed his character, or make his will and choice not his).

[237] See p. 118 for text and translation.

> For you are most painfully raving mad, and neither with drugs [*pharmakoi*]
> Nor without them would you find a cure [*akē*] for your sickness [*nosos*].

Sickness and health, poison and remedy: the *pharmakon* that is Dionysus is a substance that will have regenerative or deleterious effects depending on the patient's prior capacity to discriminate between contrasting values: to wish healthily enough. It is Dionysus' very two-facedness – *diphuēs*, *dimorphos* – that disposes him to become the god of theatre. In Attic Drama the contrast of values (and their articulation through a great variety of situations, always represented as multi-faceted and constituting moral predicament through the delineation of perspectives) is defined through valorized antitheses. The desire with which the contrastive adjudicator identifies, and which, recursively, becomes his identity, will determine whether he is in his life a futile fighter against the will and wish of immortals, an adversary – *antipalos* – of the gods, "wrestling with divinity" – *theomachein* – or whether he will have the god as an ally, *symmachos*[238].

When certain actions are incompatible with contrastively defined values such as courage, reverence, sanity, we may say that they are desirable or undesirable for reasons that are not merely contingent or circumstantial. They have been contrastively described, submitted to that process of evaluation by which persons are agents and not simply the passive, inarticulate sufferers of their desires or passions. Weak evaluators experience their desires, strong evaluators define them[239]. Pentheus has been defined by his defective judgement, which has been an insufficient master of its own *pathē*. Those *pathē* have not been recognized by Pentheus and therefore could not be articulated, denominated and evaluated. The true agents have been feelings or passions here, like the *orgia* that are said to 'hate': that, not the apparent subject who "has had" or "felt" or "practised" them, have shown agency. Pentheus, the 'active' man reaching for weapons and tools, screaming orders and delegating his will through the servants who are the prosthetics of his commanding, has been in the most significant way, passive.

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[238] *Symmachos*: § 6.2.1 p. 245 n. 65; *theomachein*: § 2.5 p. 80 n. 273.

[239] Taylor, 1985: 21, "For in strong evaluation, where we deploy a language of evaluative distinctions, the rejected desire is not so rejected because of some mere contingent or circumstantial conflict with another goal. Being cowardly does not compete with other goods by taking up the time or energy I need to pursue them, and it may or may not alter my circumstances in such a way as to prevent my pursuing them. The conflict is deeper; it is not contingent."

3.3.7 Depth & Articulacy – Articulacy about Depth

Non-qualitative evaluations may be effective in all kinds of scenarios (abstract scientific knowledge, logistical, strategic); they may answer many questions and may be of use in solving all manner of problems, but they are not concerned with articulating things so that they are "more illuminating and true to reality". Involved in qualitative decision is the conflict of self-interpretations – their choice will "shape the meanings things have for us. But the question can arise: which is more valid, more faithful to reality"[240]. The mandate that Taylor has given himself is to demonstrate that it is not only non-qualitative evaluation that is "authentic", as utilitarians argue. Again, something similar may be said of *Bacchae*, where the question of the authenticity of motives is paramount and *qualia* are privileged. The question of faithfulness to reality is not a problem for Pentheus. *He* understands real motivations, *he* sees through the pretext of bacchism[241]. Concern for quality of evaluation and mode of life has nothing to do, Pentheus has prejudged, with Dionysus and the goings-on of his followers[242]. Pentheus exhibits no conflict in his self-interpretations, nor in his interpretation of other selves.

The authenticity of Dionysus is not peripheral in *Bacchae,* it is central. Just so is the question concerning the correspondence of one's life to reality, or the truth of things, central in Tragedy. Taylor's lucid mobilization against utilitarianism casts a felicitous light on Tragedy and the articulation of its priorities. If we overlook the preoccupation in Tragedy with qualitative evaluation – its primary status and its authenticity of concern – we run the risk of becoming in our assessment of Tragedy what Pentheus is in his assessment of Dionysus, a "simple weigher".

Pentheus, a politician desirous of respect and popularity, like Agamemnon in the eyes of Menelaus in *Iphigenia at Aulis*, and like his grand-father Kadmos (who will also pay the price of losing human form) is a "simple weigher". A simple weigher is not mindless: he can evaluate courses of action, he can calculate, he has cunning. He can even suspend immediate desires in his reckoning of how to accomplish his objectives. He has the necessary reflection, evaluation and will, but not the sufficient features for strong evaluation: "he lacks something else which we often speak of with the metaphor of 'depth'."[243]

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[240] Taylor, 1985: 22.

[241] Seeing through *prophasis* "pretext" 224, see § 3.2.1. pp. 141.

[242] See on Pentheus' characteristic prejudgements and defective model of inference, § 2.6.

[243] Taylor, 1985: 36 "The line here between metaphor and basic theory is hard to draw", (in his n. 10 where he points to Ricoeur's *De l'Interprétation* [Paris, 1965]).

This metaphor of space and its relation to construals of time and the extension of self, is of great interest. It is through imagery that poetry expresses itself, and we do well to pay careful attention to that imagery, no less when it seems "natural" or obvious. The greatest survivor in Greek poetry, Odysseus, is a master of the *successive* (step following step) operations of the intelligence; of calculation and language. He endures – his most notable success is his continuance over time. He stands in contrast with the figure marked above all by spatial largeness, the man of depth; of capaciousness rather than simply capacities. Achilles, who hates the superficial man or the man whose depths are not also his surfaces[244], deepens over the course of time. Agamemnon does not himself deepen, but others, including audiences, have a deeper knowledge of themselves and others through the lessons of his fate, the acquaintance with his character. Odysseus is a master of measures, of his own depths and shallows; he controls his surfaces. Dionysus is a mutable surface and Semelē, like so many of the women of Tragedy, is a depth, an authentic relation, denied.

The weak evaluator defines his desires only to the extent of a reckoning of "what he desires plus a calculation of consequences" and obstacles. The strong evaluator has a "vocabulary of worth"; she is a nuanced describer; she characterizes richly; she defines hierarchies. She is not defined by desires but defines them; her evaluation is active and articulate. She goes beyond the mere comparison or weighing of the relative attractiveness of alternatives. This articulacy has the excavatory effect of giving *depth*.[245] The reflections of the simple weigher are inarticulate in that they terminate in preference, or attractiveness, which ultimately is contingent: I like wine because it gives me pleasure; I prefer singing to speaking because it gives me more pleasure; I am a bacchant because it is fun, licentious and its consequences are minimal – so at any rate might a figure like Pentheus, a weigher, read the motivations of others, whom he naturally sees as weighers like himself.

The usual predicament of humans is to be "faced with incommensurables". The simple weigher cannot articulate "the superiority of A over B". For her reflection will serve not to make the preferability of alternatives articulate, but only to calculate advantage and find her way to what is most desirable "concentrating on the inarticulate 'feel' of the alternatives".[246] In the strong evaluator:

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[244] Hom. *Il.* 9. 312-313: ἐχθρὸς γάρ μοι κεῖνος ὁμῶς Ἀΐδαο πύλῃσιν/ ὅς χ' ἕτερον μὲν κεύθῃ ἐνὶ φρεσίν, ἄλλο δὲ εἴπῃ.

[245] "The strong evaluator envisages alternatives through a richer language. The desirable is not only defined for him by what he desires, or what he desires plus a calculation of consequences; it is also defined by a qualitative characterization of desires as higher and lower, noble and base, and so on.", Taylor, 1985: 23.

[246] Taylor, 1985: 24.

> There is the beginning of a language of higher and lower, noble and base, courageous and cowardly, integrated and fragmented, and so on. The strong evaluator can articulate superiority just because he has a language of contrastive characterization. So within an experience of reflective choice between incommensurables, strong evaluation is a condition of articulacy, and to acquire a strongly evaluative language is to become (more) articulate about one's preferences.[247]

It should be added that one can inherit "a language of contrastive characterization", for example as a component of a religious-ethical tradition. A deeply religious person may be someone who has passively surrendered herself to something like a *routinized*, unexamined, zombie-like piety. It is, therefore, not sufficient simply to "have" such a language, but to use it originally. This is what Socrates goaded his fellow citizens to do, to ask questions about their values. That did not equate, as it does not in *Bacchae*, to the denial of conventional values. On the contrary, it can rather mean to renew them, to revitalize them through a more active re-articulation. Re-articulating the worth of *nomoi* means participating more profoundly and agentfully in tradition[248]. It is not only for ancestors to articulate and for successors to passively "receive", but for every generation and each subject to attain to the depth of an original agency – not to do so is in fact not to realize the potential for agency. In *Bacchae* Euripides preserves *nomoi* and is simultaneously exploratory, inquisitive and articulative about them. Attic drama *is* agency.

Human agency here is a 'deepening' articulacy. The strong evaluator is capable of a "plurality of visions", which the weak evaluator is not – he has what we may call 'moral imagination'. Pentheus is incapable of plurality of vision, and this receives a peculiar kind of expression in the fact that he is shown as prone to a multiplication of objects of vision but no plurality of perspectives on a single given situation. Pentheus is an hallucinator, 616-36, 918-22. He sees doubly but never deeply. He sees many things in a situation but not the one thing which is the situation in dimension, its depth.

A weak evaluator may change form, as Dionysus does and Pentheus attempts to do, to access the objects of his desires, but he does not change his desires by subjecting them to the reasoned examination of contrastive analysis. The articulacy and plurality and imagination of Tragedy, that which it anticipates and vitalizes in its audience, is of just this kind. As Taylor says of the strong evaluator, so we might say of Tragic Drama: he has "articulacy and depth which the simple weigher lacks. He has, one might say, *articulacy about depth*"[249].

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[247] Taylor, 1985: 24-5.

[248] On *nomoi* see also the lines at 894-9, discussed at p. 175-76, § 4.3 n. 101, § 5.5.3 n. 130.

[249] Taylor, 1985: 26 and further in "articulacy" see also 36-40.

3.3.8 Clarity: [*to saphes ou sapheia*]*[250]

Like people in everyday interactions with one other, the figures of the Attic stage are ever seeking clarifications. They want to know what their interlocutors actually mean and intend. The ordinary activity of seeking and securing clarity takes on a special depth in drama, where the trouble of working out what is meant can come to serve as metaphor, as a dramatizing motif and theme, of an art that is patently concerned with human life as having values and 'meaning', which are obscured in some essential way; an art concerned with lives coming into the clarity of real knowledge – *anagnōrisis* – after it is too late. Blindness, opaqueness, the hardness of discerning: these are offset by the momentary clarity that illuminates action in retrospect. Pelasgos in Aeschylus' *The Suppliant Maidens*, expresses the value of the clarity required for confident decision, and its hardness of access, with a beautiful image, Aesch. *Supp.* 407-411:

> δεῖ τοι βαθείας φροντίδος σωτηρίου,
> δίκην κολυμβητῆρος ἐς βυθὸν μολεῖν
> δεδορκὸς ὄμμα, μηδ' ἄγαν ὠνωμένον,
> ὅπως ἄνατα ταῦτα πρῶτα μὲν πόλει,
> αὐτοῖσί θ' ἡμῖν ἐκτελευτήσει καλῶς,

> It needs deep thought for safety, I tell you, to reach the depths like a sponge-diver with eyes that see and are not too clouded by wine, so that these matters may end (*ekteleutēsei*), first, without harm to the city, and then well for our own selves,[251]

Articulacy is the means towards the *telos* of clarity. Characterizations of desirability are set against each other when persons ask themselves, "how shall I act?", "*ti drasō*?" and "what do I want", *ti boulomai*?[252] The simple weigher balances preferences between options; the

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[250] "The clear is not clarity", here I am playing on 395 where the chorus sings τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία, for which see also pp. 106-107 § 3.3 p. 164, § 7.3 p.392. On the theme of clarity in *Ba.* see § 3.3.8.

[251] Trans. Collard: 2008.

[252] *Ti drasō*: Orestes not asking himself but his second self, the friend Pylades, Aesch. *Cho.* 899: Πυλάδη, τί δράσω; μητέρ' αἰδεσθῶ κτανεῖν; Soph. *Aj.* 809, 920, 1024: Οἴμοι, τί δράσω; Soph. *Phil.* 757, 908, 969, 1063 Οἴμοι· τί δράσω δύσμορος; 1350. Soph. *OC* 1254. As Rivier, 1968, argued, *ti drasō* does not necessarily mean "what shall I do", in the sense of 'how proceed?', but can also function as an expression of exasperated helplessness, faced with a feeling that there is nothing to be done. Eur. fr. 139, 66.52; *Alc.* 380, 537; in *Med.* the indicative (the determination upon a course of action) 927, 1019 and aporetic 1042, 1271 and interrogative, 1376, *IA* 356, *Hec.* 737, *Phoen.* 734, 1277, *Or.* 309; deliberative at *Heracl.* 418 and *Hipp*. 177 τί σ' ἐγὼ δράσω, τί δὲ μὴ δράσω; and expressing deliberated resolution, *Hipp.* 1088, *Andr.*731, *Supp.* 346, *El.* 986, *HF* 239, 606, *IT* 759. Aporetic: *Hec.* 419, *HF* 1157, *Tro.* 793, *Phoen.* 1310, 1615, *Or.* 1610. See Snell,

objects of his consideration are the objects of his desires. The strong evaluator confronts himself with choice as itself predicament, a 'situation of choice': "With strong evaluation, however, there can be and often is a plurality of ways of envisaging my predicament, and the choice may be not just between what is clearly the higher and the lower, *but between two incommensurable ways of looking at this choice*."[253] And indeed so it is in Greek drama, where protagonists – like Pelasgos of *The Suppliant Maidens*, or Eteocles in *The Seven against Thebes* and in *Phoenician Women*; like Agamemnon (in Aeschylus as in Euripides' *Hecuba* and *Iphigenia at Aulis*); Orestes, Admetus, Jason, etc. – are not simply faced with choices. Presented to them, so to speak, and to the audience, are also the meanings and implications of their choices: they are made to *look again at their choosing*, and their choosing will be cast as inextricable from their identity. Values are again and again made to be intrinsic to identity, not epiphenomenal, but decisive and defining. In drama, choosing is the spectacle. Evaluating, weighing and resolving constitute the very 'action' we witness. Agency is not simply having intentions and seeing others as identically intentional, but activating certain intentions amongst others, and this *action* is at the very centre of Attic Drama, the spectacle of motivated human doings, *ta dramata*, *ta prachthenta*.

Tragedy, we may say, is a 'strong evaluator', and it requires us to be strong evaluators. Certainly, it is realistic in that it does not divide the world into weak and strong, but shows that there is in persons the crucial *potential* for strong evaluation. Hence, there is a certain culpability in not realizing this potential. Protagonists tragically fail or are the victims of failures to strongly evaluate. Being or becoming a strong evaluator is not an inherent property of mortals but a form of *aretē* to which they are bidden by philosophy, poetry and religion. Not being agentful persons, Greek gods do not require of mortals that *they* be such: they do not speak of "modes of life" or "authentic and true" existences or the desirability of lives "commensurate with reality". Their human followers do – Teiresias and the bacchants, and of course Euripides – for they are interpretative and evaluative in a much stronger and imperative way than gods. Euripides' gods, like Dionysus, are relatively shallow, they know only desires and the frustration or enjoyment of desires; they do not know their lives as predicaments, situations possible to envisage from different perspectives. For gods, distortion of reality is a practical obstacle or an instrument in their stratagems (metamorphosis, disguise – Athena's mist, *achlus*, Zeus' and Dionysus' *polymorphēsis*). For mortals unclarity is ultimately a moral problem of signal importance because establishing

1928 and Rivier, 1968; and § 1.2 *Ti boulomai*? Menelaus at Eur. *IA* 485: τί βούλομαι γάρ; Cf. also the Medea *heterorropēs* 'preponderating now this way now that' at Eur. *Med.* 1044-68, e.g. 1049-50: καίτοι τί πάσχω; βούλομαι γέλωτ' ὀφλεῖν/ ἐχθροὺς μεθεῖσα τοὺς ἐμοὺς ἀζημίους; See also § 2.7 n. 324.

[253] My italics, Taylor, 1985: 26.

value and the comparative value of courses and modes of life is fundamental to them.[254] Hence they dramatize life as predicaments, scrutinize themselves and scrutinize what they have traditionally believed to be the nature of the gods.

3.3.9 'Radical Choice' is not Agentful

An important strand of philosophy in late modernity, running from Nietzsche through Sartre and into some influential Anglo-Saxon moral philosophy carries in it, explicitly or implicitly, the notion of radical choice. Since the very nub of Jean-Pierre Vernant's interpretation of Aristotle and his refutation of any kind of 'modern notion of free choice' turned upon his ascription to the modern view of 'radicality of choice', let us consider the argument again in the light of Taylor's response to radical choice[255].

For Vernant *boulē* reposes ultimately on *hexis,* which he claims is not chosen but given. This is the ultimate or radical basis, the root of inclinations and it is, in Taylor's terms, inarticulate; it terminates in "feel", it is incommensurable. Radical choice is in the final analysis beyond analysis, it is inscrutable: "The Nietzschean term 'value', suggested by our 'evaluation', carries this idea that our 'values' are our creations, that they ultimately repose on our espousing them. But to say that they ultimately repose on our espousing them is to say that they issue ultimately from a radical choice, that is, a choice which is not grounded in any reasons."[256] A radical choice is unreasoned, inarticulate. On the theory of radical choice there are no real moral dilemmas – dilemma entails the problem of choice, between choices. Option is dispensed with in the "seizing action", so to speak, of the radical choice. The notions of strong evaluation and depth are incompatible with that of radical choice: "For a radical choice *between* strong evaluations is quite conceivable, but not a radical choice *of* such evaluations"[257]. In radical choice, there is no final responsibility for evaluations. A radical chooser is much like a simple weigher in the passivity and muteness of his bearing towards his own desires. The terminal spontaneity of radical choosing is also the muteness of the inarticulate.

The difficulty of making judgements, of adjudicating in the midst of "a plurality of moral visions" is not one we can coherently hide behind such incommensurables, such opacities as

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[254] "The question at issue concerns which is the truer, more authentic, more illusion-free interpretation, and which on the other hand involves a *distortion of the meanings things have for me*. Resolving this issue is restoring commensurability." Taylor, 1985: 26.

[255] Vernant in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1972, "Ebauches de la volonté dans la tragédie grecque".

[256] Taylor, 1985: 29.

[257] Taylor, 1985: 29.

"Contingency" or the "structure of things". Radical choice ultimately abdicates authentic strong evaluation in recusing subjects from the full realization of an articulated process of personal choosing. Judgement in tragic dilemmas is very difficult. Tragic poets generally sought to make the alternatives facing their protagonists as difficult as possible and thereby as *tragikon*, as tense and intense, as memorable, gripping and excruciating to behold, as possible. In Pentheus we find a man whose problem is that he has no dilemma. He does not recognize himself as choosing and cannot recognize the god that wants to be chosen, wished for and not merely grasped after or grasped. Pentheus' tragedy is, in a paradoxical way, his failure to find himself in a situation of choice and its deliberation. Hence, perhaps, does his fate bear these comic traces. To gain the greatest purchase on the audience will have required the most skillful adaptation in dramatic situations of the intelligible with the extreme. The ethical interest in agency and theodicy is inseparable from the rhetorical, agonistic poet's imperative to draw characters and situations such that they show the maximum power to involve the spectator. By the end of the 5th Century, Tragedy and its audience has become so mature, that the tragic situation can be appreciably so drawn as to not only be the traditional pattern of a protagonist faced with incommensurable alternatives, but one who has not even been able to look upon himself and his situation as one offering alternative possibilities.

The tragic poet presented the predicaments of his protagonists as the predicaments of man, *ho anthrōpos*. Such predicament means to be faced with *the dilemma of having dilemma*, the problem that things matter profoundly but inexactly, and that morality – personal agency – cannot be easily surrendered without the surrender of something fundamental and of very great value in existence. We cannot coherently explain away responsibility by covering it with the veil of radical choice. That is the obscuring terminalism of 'choice espoused'. As Taylor argues it, "this in turn leads to a second strong evaluation beyond the reach of choice . . . Granted this is the moral predicament of man, it is more honest, courageous, self-clairvoyant, hence a higher mode of life, to choose in lucidity than it is to hide one's choices behind the supposed structure of things, to flee from one's responsibility at the expense of lying to oneself, of a deep self-duplicity."[258] Such honesty, courage and *self-clairvoyance* is exactly what the imperial city of Athens, with its hubristic and destructive policies and foolhardy expeditions, its vindictive retributions and insufficiently evaluated prosecutions of its best citizens needed to hear, as the disastrous Peloponnesian War drew to its end. It should not be understood that these values are good because they ensure survival or have political utility. It is rather that the reverse is more sure to bring a shorter or diminished life, βραχὺς αἰών, 397. Not losing what is at hand or present, right before your eyes, is the effect

[258] Taylor, 1985: 33.

of Dionysiac wisdom, 397-9. It is not the *telos* of Dionysiac wisdom to survive, and adopt bacchic ways only as the means to that. One has clairvoyance, the right attitude and bearing to the gods and one's own mortality. A consequence of the desire for those will be a mode of being, which is not self-destructive and oblivious of the desirability not of things absent, but of the good and pure that is present, *ta paronta*.

3.3.10 Identity

> Pe. σοφὸς σοφὸς σύ, πλὴν ἃ δεῖ σ' εἶναι σοφόν.
> Di. ἃ δεῖ μάλιστα, ταῦτ' ἔγωγ' ἔφυν σοφός.
>
> Pe. Clever clever you are, except in ways you ought to be clever.
> Di. How most I ought, that's how I am clever.

Bacchae dramatizes identity as problem. The common and automatic way for a Greek man to identify himself is to name himself, name his father and place of origins, which is to say, to *locate* himself in time and place and relation. Dionysus has many names and he and his worshippers return often to asserting the meaning of the name 'Dionysus' and its effectiveness in explaining his identity. Its effectiveness derives precisely from its *binding* him to his father, a testimony to his paternity[259] (more than a sign which is flexible, and arbitrary, it is an index, almost an object, this name which is a trace, like the *horkos* of the oath-taker). When Pentheus is told he is not who he thinks he is, he answers as any Greek hero or man normally would[260]. The answer he receives is only the most literal way in which identity and identification are complicated and made not obvious (in a play in which disguise, transvestiture and metamorphosis, the limitations of the strictly literal and apparent, are so prominent).

The connection of a person with a name, as person with body, is a tenuous, arbitrary, denatured one; or it is a strong, natured one, from case to case. *Nomen* can be *omen*. Humans are challenged to discern authentic, revealed or proclaimed truth, from the arbitrarily given meaning, the sign which is bound *by convention* to its referent, perilously subject to subjective motivations. It is the difference between *prophēteia*, access to truth, and *prophasis*,

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[259] For the phonic and semantic entanglement of Dionysos and "son of god" *Dios huios, Dios pais, Dios gonos*: Ἥκω Διὸς παῖς…Διόνυσος 1-2, Διόνυσον οὐκ ἔφασκον ἐκφῦναι Διός 27, ὁ δαίμων ὁ Διὸς παῖς 417, Διόνυσος αὐτός μ' εἰσέβησ', ὁ τοῦ Διός 466, ὦ Διὸς παῖ/Διόνυσε 550, 581, τὸν Διὸς /Διόνυσον 859-60, Διὸς γόνος 603, 725, 1342.

[260] 506-7: Di. οὐκ οἶσθ' †ὅτι ζῇς† οὐδ' ὃ δρᾶις οὐδ' ὅστις εἶ. / Pe. Πενθεύς, Ἀγαυῆς παῖς, πατρὸς δ' Ἐχίονος. On the text here see § 2.2.1.2 n. 122.

pretexts concealing truth. The naturalness or arbitrariness of names, a question of such importance for 20th Century theory and dealt with by Plato extensively in the *Cratylus* (an extensive "naturalizing" of language and the origins of words), is a question raised in *Bacchae*. Only the raising of certain kinds of questions, the introduction of different possibilities of seeing things, is sufficient to change our ways of seeing.[261]

A strong evaluator, in its concern not only with ends, *telē*, but with the quality of its life and itself *qua* agent, may be said to be one who attends to its identity. Identity is "defined by our fundamental evaluations" as Taylor argues. A certain patriarchal political and social order, a patrilineal organization of the imagination of time and generations, an articulation of authority on the model of Zeus-like sovereignty and a code of honour and social currency that expresses itself in *andreia* and the legitimation of unchallenged birthright and paternal relation – all of this is certainly caught up in the system of values, expressed by the normal Greek understanding, ("So my lineage is part of my identity because it is bound up with certain qualities I value"[262]). This is a normalcy and intelligibility the play relies on and even exploits, in order the better to challenge. What it challenges is the unarticulated character of the normative. A work like *Bacchae,* and much of the Tragic corpus, is a provocation to the citizenry (as provocative in its "pricking", "stinging", *oistrān*, as the pressure of Socrates' questionings) to become more articulate about itself, to take on an ever deeper identity, to become more agentful.

Bacchae presents the prospect of figures "shorn" of their capacity to evaluate, "shorn" of their agency. The Theban women from the outset and Pentheus, in a process we are given to observe, are broken down as persons – theirs will have been a shearing of their selves asunder, a cutting of that which binds together a person. The *binding* of self to actions, a web or skein, which constitutes one as self, as person, comes undone, *luein*.[263] We discern in their fates the integrally connected character of the evaluative capacity, the articulacy of personhood and agency.[264]

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[261] For challenges to views on identity see on Eteocles' identity as a son, brother, man and warrior, how he envisages himself in following § 3.3.11. Cf. also Hecuba at Eur. *Hec* 849-76; Agamemnon's and Achilles' exchanges in *IA* 317-542; and, of course, Pentheus' as ineffective soldier, fighter and emasculated king in *Bacchae*.

[262] Taylor, 1985: 34.

[263] "Our identity is therefore defined as certain evaluations which are inseparable from ourselves as agents. Shorn of these we would cease to be ourselves . . . we would lose the very possibility of being an agent who evaluates; that our existence as persons, and hence our ability to adhere as persons to certain evaluations, would be impossible outside the horizon of these essential evaluations, *that we would break down as persons, be incapable of being persons in the full sense.*", Taylor, 1985: 34-5.

[264]The inarticulacy of *mania*: The play presents the spectacle of words, names and arguments losing or having lost their grip on things. In *Bacchae* inarticulate utterance displaces language amongst protagonists for whom language has not been powerfully discerning enough. Dionysus enchants Pentheus with a meaningless but entirely efficacious "Ah.", 810. Amongst the worshippers of Dionysus, filled as they are with his animal-divine power, the ecstatic shout, the ululation and the bestial shriek unite them with one another and with their god, and

Taylor uses a language most apposite to the events of *Bacchae*, in his exploration of the notion of identity and its relation to the capacity for evaluation. Being forced by "torture or brainwashing to abandon these convictions by which I define my identity, I would be shattered . . . no longer a subject capable of knowing where I stood and what the meanings of things were for me . . . a terrifying breakdown of precisely those capacities which define a human agent". This shattering, disorientation, abandonment and breakdown is just what occurs in *Bacchae*. Here, unlike for example in the case of Sophocles' Oedipus in whose fate there is hope of redemption[265], the most extreme forms of aporia, of the diminishment of agency, are brought before the imagination of the audience.

Pentheus breaks down in his volitional capacities and his cognitive faculties; he is disoriented as in desires and what he thinks he is and then he is literally shattered in his body. He has repudiated some critical potential in mortals, to strongly evaluate, which is its own punishment, for "Such repudiation would both be itself inauthentic and would make me incapable of other authentic evaluations."[266] Identity "refers us" to those essential evaluations (the subject matter of Tragedy), which form the "indispensable horizon or foundation out of which we reflect as persons". *Bacchae*, rather than a 'crisis of symbols'[267], is the dramatization of an "identity crisis" in this strong sense. Here we witness just that "terrifying experience of disaggregation and loss" of the lost or never discerned horizon of fundamental evaluations.[268]

In a certain sense, the gods of Euripides[269], Dionysus, the Theban women and what Pentheus will become are in fact Taylor's 'impossibilities'. The *xenos aporos* of *Bacchae*, is what Taylor

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supplanted language with its powers of discrimination, e.g. εὔια τὸν εὔιον ἀγαλλόμεναι θεὸν / ἐν Φρυγίαισι βοαῖς ἐνοπαῖσί τε, 157-8. Bacchus, Dionysus himself is the shout, his name is the "holy cry" *Euios*, 566, 579. Similar is *Iacchos* for Dionysus, and the noun "shout, wail" *iachē*, such as we find at 148-9: πλανάτας ἐρεθίζων/ ἰαχαῖς. What belongs to him is described by this onomatopeic name, 238, 608. The bacchants identify themselves as a "band of the divine cry", δέχεσθ' ἐς κῶμον εὐίου θεοῦ. 1167. The maenads are the very picture, always, either of chaste (e.g. 683-8) or uncanny hush (1084-5) or of wild inarticulacy: ἦν δὲ πᾶσ' ὁμοῦ βοή, / ὁ μὲν στενάζων ὅσον ἐτύγχαν' ἐμπνέων, / αἱ δ' ὠλόλυζον. 1131-3. They stir always not by the impulsion of an inwardly arising and personal imperative, but to the call from outside, 689-91: ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσαις / σταθεῖσα βάκχαις ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας, / μυκήμαθ' ὡς ἤκουσε κεροφόρων βοῶν. On Dionysiac *mania* see Jeanmaire, 1951: 105-56.

[265] In Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus* the wary Oedipus meets his end summoned by the voice of god Soph. *OC* 1629, (see the messenger's speech at Soph. *OC* 1586-1666); this is only forecast in the distant future for Kadmos and Harmonia in *Bacchae* 1336-9.

[266] Just as being virtuous is its own reward, as Socrates argues in *Gorgias*.

[267] Segal, 1997 [1982]: 272-347.

[268] Taylor, 1985: 35.

[269] Remarks on the gods: note Clytemnestra's telling remark at Eur. *IA* 1034-5: "if there are <intelligent [and thereby *intelligible*]> gods a man will get rewards being just, if there are not, what is the point of making any effort in life at all", but Diggle would delete <intelligent> = <συνετοὶ>, giving "if there be gods", viz. of any kind: εἰ δ' εἰσὶ <συνετοὶ> θεοί, δίκαιος ὢν ἀνὴρ / ἐσθλῶν κυρήσεις· εἰ δὲ μή, τί δεῖ πονεῖν; When Euripides wrote these plays and put them together in 406, he was setting up the existence and certainly the nature of the gods as an

calls the person with no horizon of evaluation. Their identity, its dissipation in the strong internal sense, is expressed in the dissolution of individual personhood, in the insignia, *skeuē*, the marks of a falsifiable identity, items also borne by *nathēkophoroi*; the maenads are the *Paradebeispiel* of entities[270]: "utterly without identity . . . a kind of extensionless point, a pure leap into the void . . . description of the most terrible mental alienation."[271] Pentheus had thought he could take the position and perspective of a god, a perspective above that of mortals and the face-to-face interactions of the *durée* of human life. He had been tempted, which is to say that his weak desires had been used against him as bait, *dolos*[272], into thinking that, like a god, he could see from above and not be seen. He thinks he can have what no human can, despite the pretensions of certain positivistic (hubristically optimistic?) strands of scientific approaches: a view from nowhere[273]. Looking down from above, out of an unimplicated consciousness as if from the *theologeion*, is impossible for mortals in a permanent way but only provisionally in the projective theatre, unless they are to incur the loss of what defines them most valuably, most essentially as persons, their intersubjectivity: *homilia*.

In Pentheus' fate we learn the nature of that profound diminution of humanity and the weakness of agency, that belongs both to the *mad* and to gods – those categories of person marked so much by their externality. Losing or not having need of *bouleusis* in a strong sense is to be a creature of radical choice. As Taylor fittingly puts it for us in our consideration of this radically irresponsible god of Euripides, Dionysus – the figure now embodied now disembodied[274] – the subject for whom the subjectivity of others is dispensable, a "technique

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open question, a torch which cast dancing shadows on human acts. On the gods in Euripides see Lefkowitz, 2016 *Euripides & the Gods*. Of Dionysus in *Bacchae* she writes, "Neither Dionysus nor any other god does anything to change the reality of human suffering." (Lefkowitz, 2016: 148), which is not quite true. Dionysus is repeatedly invoked as the god who brings the only relief from anxiety, *merimnai*, and who transforms 'labour', *ponos*, (τί δεῖ πονεῖν;) into something sweet, bringing the only 'cure', *akē*, for mortals. She is right that gods show no compunction, but it is the spectacle of this absence, which illuminates the deep importance to humans of compunction and compassion. On *ponos* see also above § 2.2.1.1 n. 81.

[270] The non-falsifiability of strong evaluation and thus of personal agency, is perhaps one of the deepest lessons or conclusions of *Bacchae.*

[271] Taylor, 1985: 35.

[272] See below § 4.2.2 on *dolos*.

[273] His 'view from nowhere' is an eminence like a monstrous thyrsus in which this head of state will be staked for his stake-out, 1059-62, [ὄχθων δ' ἔπ' ἀμβὰς ἐς ἐλάτην ὑψαύχενα 1061]. Its impossibility means he is only more conspicuous, isolated on his "eminence", more seen than seeing, ὤφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας· 1075. They will spot him, ὡς δ' εἶδον ἐλάτηι δεσπότην ἐφήμενον 1095, and yet he will remain unseen 1115-24, for they are those collapsed points of view, the disastrous realization of that human dream to see "objectively", as if from a "view from nowhere" which reveals iotself precisely to be as Taylor puts it the fate of one "utterly without identity . . . a kind of extensionless point", Taylor, 1985: 35.

[274] He appears out of absence unforeseeable and makes himself unseeable in his presence as is emphatically expressed in the prologue, 1-63; he plays with the idea of an absent presence and a present absnce in the course of the episodes, 500-2, 629-30, addressing Dionysus in the second person 824-5, Διόνυσε, νῦν σὸν ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ εἶ πρόσω· 849, 850 and speaking both of "him" in the third and as him in the first as at 854-61, but also 923 and 975-6; but see esp. ξένος θ' ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας 1046… καὶ τὸν ξένον μὲν οὐκέτ' εἰσορᾶν παρῆν,/ ἐκ δ' αἰθέρος φωνή τις, ὡς μὲν εἰκάσαι/ Διόνυσος, ἀνεβόησεν, 1077-8.

as person", one of human creation, for the purposes of contrast: "The subject of radical choice is another avatar of that recurrent figure which our civilization aspires to realize, the disembodied ego, the subject who can objectify all being, including his own and choose in radical freedom. But this promised total self-possession would in fact be the most total self-loss."[275]

3.3.11 Identity & Choice: Tragic Case-Studies

For André Rivier the Furies, the *atē* which penetrates humans from without and ruins their mastery of self[276] and the *orgē* ('l'emportement') or passion which carries off Eteocles in *Seven Against Thebes*: these are the objective realities of a world and a 'theocentric vision' insufficiently grasped by modern interpreters. It is a vision that gets inappropriately explained away in anachronistic terms, by modern scholars[277]. His *orgē*, the power of the Furies which is irresistible[278], a madness which the chorus calls "heart-bursting, spear-raging frenzy" (θυμοπλη-/θὴς δορίμαργος ἄτα[279]), these Aeschylean qualifications are irreconcilable with "la notion de volonté" that obtains amongst modern interpreters, according to Rivier[280]. Yet, what we see in both the dramas of those young Theban pretenders, Eteocles and Pentheus, is that what is definitive for a mortal's identity is not whether he is or is not subject to daemonic influence, but in his handling of the recognition of limitations and compulsions laid upon him.

Bacchae is the account of resistance to the god (a model for which was Aeschylus' own *Edonians*[281]), a god coming from without, one who intervenes and invests the city, laying a cognitive and affective siege, driving the citizens out of their minds with *mania*, *parakopoi*[282],

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[275] Taylor, 1985: 35.

[276] *Atē*: 'madness', a penetration of a person that disorders them cognitively and emotionally, so that they are not entirely their own. On Agamemnon and his identification of the cause of his acts, see Dodds, 1951: 1-18

[277] Rivier, 1968: 14.

[278] *Orgē*: Aesch. *Sept.* 678: ὀργὴν ὁμοῖος τῷ κάκιστ' αὐδωμένῳ. Irresistible Fury: *Aesch*. *Sept.* 70: Ἀρά τ' Ἐρινὺς πατρὸς ἡ μεγασθενής.

[279] Aesch. *Sept.* 685-7: τί μέμονας, τέκνον; μή τί σε θυμοπλη- / θὴς δορίμαργος ἄτα φερέτω· κακοῦ δ' / ἔκβαλ' ἔρωτος ἀρχάν.

[280] Eteocles feels himself pursued by his family's curse, in words resonant for the Theban family depicted in the *Bacchae*, his "line", γένος, is one driven mad by a god, θεομανές, Aesch. *Sept.* 653-4: ὦ θεομανές τε καὶ θεῶν μέγα στύγος, / ὦ πανδάκρυτον ἀμὸν Οἰδίπου γένος·. Cf. also in Aesch. *Sept.* 686-7, where Eteocles sounds truly the descendant of that House of Kadmos and the luckless Pentheus, the king borne off (*ata pheretō* 686). And the lines given the chorus at Aesch. *Sept.* 692-3, where Eteocles' desire, *himeros*, is designated literally 'flesh chewing': ὠμοδακής σ' ἄγαν ἵμερος ἐξοτρύ- / νει πικρόκαρπον ἀνδροκτασίαν τελεῖν / αἵματος οὐ θεμιστοῦ.

[281] On Aeschylus' Lykourgus trilogy, about the Thracian king who refused to recognize Dionysus and his maenads and was driven mad and killed his own son, mistaking him for a vine his frenzy, see § 4.3.1 p. 172 n. 106, also Hom. *Il.* 6. 132-7.

[282] *Bacchae*: ὄρος δ' οἰκοῦσι παράκοποι φρενῶν 33; μανείσαι πραπίδι / παρακόπωι τε λήματι στέλλεται, 999-1000. Cf. Aesch. *Ag.* 218-27, where Agamemnon forced to choose, resolves to slaughter his own daughter at Aulis. He "puts on the strap of Necessity", and is released to act by *parakopa* 223, "frenzy" or "derangement", which makes men over-bold.

neutralizing the faculties of discernment, which thereby take on a critical, thematic place in the work. In the *Seven Against Thebes*, disputed in its reading on this point by Lesky and Rivier, there is a moment of great interest for the reading of agency in Tragedy[283]. Eteocles is readying himself to meet his brother in a duel, one that can only bring deeper malediction, the most abhorrent pollution of fratricide[284]. Throughout the exchange[285], the chorus of young Theban women warns about extreme emotional states and their dangers, which they want the warrior to recognize in order to be able to escape. Eteocles, however, demonstrates a deep sense of his own fatefulness and that also of his family. The only thing to be done, since fighting is fatefully unavoidable, he says, is to go to it without disgrace, preserving his heroic identity in the eyes of others and of himself[286]. What must be clear about Eteocles is that it is a certain notion of himself, a certain identity that he wants to preserve. The impulse to protect this idea about himself entails a judgement about life and its value. Choosing to find oneself in an irresistible situation can also be a choice, the choice of acquiescence, the repudiation of a certain kind of active stance in favour of one more passive, which in this instance is judged more amenable by Eteocles. His bearing will have been a value call.

Oedipus' son thinks theologically, or perhaps he justifies a choice already taken with religious pretexts. Perhaps the lines between thought, belief and pretext are deliberately unclear, and that would surely be very true to human life and psychology. Therein lies some deal of the power of such a scene. Its psychological realism and intelligibility lie precisely in the inconclusiveness and scarcely distinguishable division of spiritual realities and psychological states. Can the daemonic forces that have prosecuted the Labdacids be both real *and* used as a pretext for taking certain courses of action? If not in the *theomachein* of *Bacchae*, then at any rate in a certain kind of chafing against the yoke of constraint, in a certain internal *machein* and resistance to being reduced to something of completely abdicated volition, there lies a redeeming agency. It is redeeming in that such a struggle (or resistance to the possibility of the irresistible) re-constitutes the identity of a person in its own eyes and in the eyes of others.

Eteocles does not have a privileged knowledge of divinity. The gods and their minds are opaque in every way to mortals. Those who *are* said to have a special knowledge of the gods, seers, are typically attacked and discredited in Greek poetry[287], which is significant above all because it points to the abiding anticipation amongst actors of pretexts that are

[283] Lesky, 1966, Rivier, 1968.

[284] Aesch. *Sept.* 681-2.

[285] Aesch. *Sept.* 677-718.

[286] Aesch. *Sept.* 683-5.

[287] Discreditable seers: see § 2.2.1.1 n. 73 § 2.2.1.2 n. 103, § 4.3.7 n.166, § 5.2.2 n. 13.

presumed to serve only the concealment of *real* motivations. Eteocles can, at moments, almost have the narcissistic resignation to a self-destructive fate, which he expects to define him – like the cynical and possibly vain suicide-killers of today, he is pursuing the "only" kind of glory, *eukleia*, available to him[288]. If this is an act that will incur moral pollution, it is also an aggrandizing gesture, but a god has brought it on, and forcefully so, says the fatalistic son of Oedipus that decent, upstanding (if hobbled, *oidi-pous*) fugitive from what had been ordained, Aesch. *Septem*. 689-91[289]:

> ἐπεὶ τὸ πρᾶγμα κάρτ' ἐπισπέρχει θεός,
> ἴτω κατ' οὖρον, κῦμα Κωκυτοῦ λαχόν,
> Φοίβῳ στυγηθὲν πᾶν τὸ Λαΐου γένος.

> Since a god very much hurries the business on, let the whole line of Laius detested by Apollo go along with the wind now that Cocytus' wave is its lot.

Does Eteocles have a heightened sense of the divine will operating through the world? Or is he rather renouncing personal autonomy in the contemptuous gesture of a hero who abnegates a private life (and its pleasures and possibilities) for the 'higher individualism' of a famous death, in the service of an ideal greater than and external to himself? Eteocles views things in terms of curse, fate, the infection of an inherited guilt, but also of honour and shame, of man full of good and full of bad, of forces that are present amongst and also that abandon humans, of lot and of obligation to oneself, obligations stronger than any to family or city. He may very well be subject to objective forces, forces effectively outside of the human mind, in its consciousness and its darkness, but he is clearly concerned with his image of himself, and notions of how to comport himself contain great import for him. So we hear at Aesch. *Sept.* 698-703:

> Cho.
> ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ 'ποτρύνου· κακὸς οὐ κεκλή-
> σῃ βίον εὖ κυρήσας· μελάναιγις [δ'] οὐκ
> † εἶσι δόμων Ἐρινύς, ὅταν ἐκ χερῶν
> θεοὶ θυσίαν δέχωνται.

[288] Aesch. *Sept.* 683-5: εἴπερ κακὸν φέροι τις, αἰσχύνης ἄτερ/ ἔστω· μόνον γὰρ κέρδος ἐν τεθνηκόσι·/ κακῶν δὲ κᾀσχρῶν οὔτιν' εὐκλείαν ἐρεῖς.

[289] Trans. Collard: 2008.

But do not yourself press on! You will not be called
Ignoble if you secure your life well;
The Fury cloaked in black storm will go out of the house
Once the gods get your hands' sacrifice.

Eteoc.

θεοῖς μὲν ἤδη πως παρημελήμεθα,
χάρις δ' ἀφ' ἡμῶν ὀλομένων θαυμάζεται·
τί οὖν ἔτ' ἂν σαίνοιμεν ὀλέθριον μόρον;

The gods are already past caring for me, it would seem,
And the favour they prize from me is death. Why then should I
still fawn to avoid my fated death?

Eteocles is possessed of a powerful sense of human lot, *moros*. His drama suggests that a man may not choose his fate but at any rate can choose his comportment[290]. This person certainly comes across as a fatalist[291]. And yet he must repress his feelings[292] and cling hard to the *idée fixe* of his inherited curse, force himself to action, nearly. His fatalism does not come as smoothly or effortlessly as fated things should. He seems to goad himself on, through a kind of self-loathing to which he very vividly and repeatedly returns[293]. The chorus deplores his readiness as "madness, mindless raging", and beseeches him not to proceed, A. *Septem* 705-8[294]:

νῦν ὅτε σοι παρέστακεν· ἐπεὶ δαίμων
λήματος ἂν τροπαίᾳ χρονίᾳ μεταλ-
λακτὸς ἴσως ἂν ἔλθοι θελεμωτέρῳ
πνεύματι· νῦν δ' ἔτι ζεῖ.

Wait while it stands at your side, since in a late veer
Of its will the divine power might perhaps
Be changeable and come on more gently with its breath;
But the storm is still boiling now.

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[290] Aesch. *Sept.* 683-5.

[291] Aesch. *Sept.* 719: θεῶν διδόντων οὐκ ἂν ἐκφύγοις κακά.

[292] Aesch. *Sept.* 656-7: ἀλλ' οὔτε κλαίειν οὔτ' ὀδύρεσθαι πρέπει, / μὴ καὶ τεκνωθῇ δυσφορώτερος γόος.

[293] Aesch. *Sept.* πατρὸς δὴ νῦν ἀραὶ τελεσφόροι, 655; 695-7; 709-11.

[294] See also Aesch. *Sept.* μή τί . . . ἅτα φερέτω 685-6, ἀλλὰ σὺ μὴ 'ποτρύνου, 698. I have modified Collard's translation here, where he translated *lēma* at 706 with "mood", I read "will". See on *lēma* § 2.5 n. 255.

It has boiled up already, in his father, Oedipus' curse, *kateugma*. He has seen as much in his dreams, which he takes to be true; they correspond to reality. They have showed something unbearable, the dividing up of his father's wealth, a final scattering of any honour[295]. "Listen to a woman's voice, even if you are disinclined to", Aesch. *Sept.* 712; the chorus leader makes one last appeal, and here things become all the more framed in terms of character and the self-understanding of the participants. The exchange is now stichomythic and pointed, Aesch. *Septem* 712-18: Eteocles will not be dissuaded, he has become a pure instrument for the accomplishment of one kind of purpose, wherever that purpose may originate: τεθηγμένον τοί μ' οὐκ ἀπαμβλυνεῖς λόγῳ, Aesch. *Sept*. 715.

Is it really a trick of the modern eye here to sense a certain ambiguity, a crack in this *theocentric world* and a potential for alternative action?[296] "But god also honours an 'ignoble' victory", νίκην γε μέντοι καὶ κακὴν τιμᾷ θεός, Aesch. *Sept.* 716: the chorus consistently opens up alternative, possible paths, here strikingly the non-heroic, *kakēn*, option in which there is, it claims, divine legitimation. The chorus is speaking Eteocles' double language: male heroic and theological fatalist. He has set upon taking the course of violence, on realizing the curse, which he *wants to see* as ineluctably real; a man in armour will not be talked out of it, and not by a woman: οὐκ ἄνδρ' ὁπλίτην τοῦτο χρὴ στέργειν ἔπος Aesch. *Sept.* 717. "But do you wish to reap the blood of your own brother?" asks the choryphaeus; he deflects the question about his own desires with a gnomic declaration about what 'one' cannot get away from, Aesch. *Sept.* 718-9:

> Ch. ἀλλ' αὐτάδελφον αἷμα δρέψασθαι θέλεις;
> Et. θεῶν διδόντων οὐκ ἂν ἐκφύγοις κακά.
>
> Ch. But is it your wish to reap a crop from your own brother's blood?
> Et. If the gods give it, you can't escape evil.

Tragic persons like Eteocles are obligated; they are enmeshed in purposes and plans that are not theirs, in which they can be as if passive instruments. This goes as much for people today as ever before. What we find interesting about people, why we are drawn to the spectacle of fates whose outcomes we already know, is to some degree because in the spectre of resistance to Necessity (Oedipus), surrender to it (Eteocles) or its misjudgement (Pentheus), we witness the drama of the *freedom of bearing*, which engages us so powerfully

[295] Aesch. *Sept.* 709-11: ἐξέζεσεν γὰρ Οἰδίπου κατεύγματα·/ ἄγαν δ' ἀληθεῖς ἐνυπνίων φαντασμάτων / ὄψεις, πατρῴων χρημάτων δατήριοι.

[296] Certainly, at any rate, not for a Euripides for whom not only the tightness of hold that daemonic forces have on humans is uncertain, but in whom the possibility that the gods 'are not there' or have no interest in human lives, is evoked, cf. Eur. *IA* 1035-7.

because, as Tragedy and much wisdom literature repeatedly reminds us, the import that things and situations have for us, is decisive. They will determine the nature and quality of our existences and we determine what import things will have, while we move among one another under the sun. In Pentheus it is his resistance that will define him, the choice through which is expressed his identity. In Eteocles it is in his unwillingness to resist daemonic forces that his volitional weakness is revealed. Neither has chosen to be an articulate chooser, to strongly evaluate or revise their motivations. Not Snell, Rivier or Vernant but Albin Lesky came closer to seeing this essential point. It is in their bearing towards fate, in their manner of choosing, that mortals are or fail to become agentful:

> The chorus reminds Eteokles of the inexpiable crime of fratricide, and when the king points out that this is a question of honour, the chorus retorts that he is not only accepting the fatal conflict but that he is desiring it out of his own will . . . Do we not find here again what our analysis of the passage in *Agamemnon* so clearly showed: man being led by fate to a terrible deed, however, he not only accepts but desires and passionately undertakes.[297]

Pentheus of Thebes, the earlier ancestor of Eteocles, is also on a war footing[298]. He needs no justification; he is confronted with human shamefulness and reads everything, including the god whom he fails to recognize, in terms of human motivations. If he felt there were a family curse he might have said it were in the Theban surplus of women and their womanly motivations run amok. Yet, Pentheus is, in a certain light, a kind of anti-Eteocles. Although both are concerned with *timē*, honour, "face" and with *aischunē* "shame" – alike will they be carried back into Thebes, killed at the hands of their own kin; unhappy in their *daemons*, dying through impious motive, *asebei dianoiai*[299] and mourned by maenadic voices[300] – Eteocles casts himself as a collaborator with the dark will of unanswerable divine forces, while Pentheus and his Thebes fight against the god and forfeit everything, when they could at so little cost have had the god for ally, *symmachos*[301].

Pentheus detects human agency and human motivation everywhere; Eteocles declares himself suborned to a will not his own, a daemonic and inescapable will, but one that he does not at all resist. Both are men who willingly fight others but do not struggle with their own selves. Disinclination to even begin to countenance himself as other than he has already

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[297] Lesky, 1966: 83-4.

[298] 45, 50-2, 226-32, 239-41, 653, but esp. 778-86.

[299] ἀσεβεῖ διανοίᾳ: Aesch. *Sept.* 825-31. On Pentheus' *asebeia* see § 2.2.5 p. 86 n. 184 and on *sebein* § 3.1 p. 137 n. 10

[300] Aesch. *Sept.* 835-6: ἔτευξα τύμβῳ μέλος/ θυιὰς.

[301] Little cost: 893-4: κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-/ ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν. God for ally, 1341-3: εἰ δὲ σωφρονεῖν/ ἔγνωθ', ὅτ' οὐκ ἠθέλετε, τὸν Διὸς γόνον/ ηὐδαιμονεῖτ' ἂν σύμμαχον κεκτημένοι.

projected is powerfully expressed in that feeblest of pretexts, that a man already dressed for battle does not like talking (about the different things that the gods may honour) οὐκ ἄνδρ' ὁπλίτην τοῦτο χρὴ στέργειν ἔπος[302].

For the spear and sceptre that are his normal instruments of power, Pentheus in his derangement will take up the "ivy-shaft"[303]; Eteocles in his raving is borne by a spear-raging madness[304]. They are males who fail to heed the maenadic voices of female Thebes. If it is difficult to discern the pattern of their deliberating and volition, if in fact things are so scrambled, so entangled that we can not cleanly separate divine intention from human acts, what is surely clear is that from one of the earliest surviving Classical Tragedies to the last (Aesch. *Sept.* 460s BCE, Eur. *Bacchae* 405 BC): *agency is a problem*. Where divine will ends and where human will starts is unclear; motivations are elusive, that of the gods, that of others and that even of oneself. What are actions and what only happenings; what acts and what mere movements – this is a problem for people to whom meaning matters[305].

After its last futile attempt to persuade Eteocles not to fight, the Chorus sings, now in fatalistic mode. Persuasion has failed. That *Erinus*, called up by the father, must be "working out Oedipus' angry curse"[306]. A "child-slaying strife urges it on" παιδολέτωρ δ' ἔρις ἅδ' ὀτρύνει, 726. This *Erinus*, like an enduring prosthetic of a father's dreadful will, is a "destroyer of houses, not like the gods, forgetting nothing [*panalēthē*], a prophet of evil"[307]. What would appear more of a refutation of the agency of mortal will than the notion of inherited guilt and responsibility? Yet, if one can inherit the merit that belongs to kings[308], why not also, we might ask, inherit responsibility. In Tragedy the pattern is never to show mortals as ever only the objects of external powers, but rather always to detect a mix of causes defining human predicaments.

Sophocles' Oedipus asks if it were not reasonable to judge himself to have been the abject toy of a savage divine agency[309]. He, like Job in the Old Testament, is a man marked by a rare kind of innocence. Yet his father has brought about this state of affairs. *He* had chosen to ignore the oracle of Apollo three times. Laius was the "victim of his own unwillingness" to

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[302] Aesch. *Sept.* 717.

[303] κίσσινον βέλος, 25. In *Bacchae* the ordinary tools and weapons (λογχωτὸν βέλος, 761) are ineffective and displaced by the gods efficacious symbols.

[304] Pentheus: 941-2. Eteocles: A. *Septem.* 686: δορίμαργος ἅτα φερέτω.

[305] On Giddens on Wittgenstein on 'movements' vs 'acts', see Giddens, 1984: 65-6 and on 'happenings' as opposed to 'actions' from the point of view of the anthropology of agency in art, see § 4.3.2 n. 111.

[306] 724-5: τελέσαι τὰς περιθύμους/κατάρας Οἰδιπόδα βλαψίφρονος·.

[307] Aesch. *Septem.* 720-2: πέφρικα τὰν ὠλεσίοικον / θεόν, οὐ θεοῖς ὁμοίαν,/ παναληθῆ, κακόμαντιν,

[308] Pentheus' inherited power and status: 43-4, 213.

[309] Soph. *OT* 828-9: Ἆρ' οὐκ ἀπ' ὠμοῦ ταῦτα δαίμονός τις ἂν/ κρίνων ἐπ' ἀνδρὶ τῷδ' ἂν ὀρθοίη λόγον;

take good counsel, his *aboulia*, according to Aeschylus[310]. His ancestor Kadmos would suffer involuntary bereavement of male issue[311]; Laius did not have the good sense nor good fortune, to produce no issue, Aesch. *Sept.* 741-51:

> παλαιγενῆ γὰρ λέγω
> παρβασίαν ὠκύποι-
> νον, αἰῶνα δ' ἐς τρίτον
> μένειν, Ἀπόλλωνος εὖτε Λάιος
> βίᾳ, τρὶς εἰπόντος ἐν
> μεσομφάλοις Πυθικοῖς
> χρηστηρίοις θνήσκοντα γέν-
> νας ἄτερ σῴζειν πόλιν.
>
> κρατηθεὶς δ' ἐκ φιλᾶν ἀβουλιᾶν
> ἐγείνατο μὲν μόρον αὑτῷ,
>
> Of the ancient transgression,
> I speak, its penalty swift; and it remains
> to the third generation, ever since,
> despite Pythian Apollo in his seat of oracles,
> the world's navel, thrice telling him
> to save his city by dying without issue,
>
> Laius was conquered by pleasing folly [*aboulia*]
> and got for a son his own death.

Zeus had long before assented to this destruction of Thebes and the oracle of Zeus had forecast the events that would follow after the close of the action of *Bacchae*. The play concludes with prediction of the uncanny, future life of exile for Kadmos and Harmonia[312]. Yet we have been made throughout to feel that Kadmos and the Kadmeians have made choices, have had the space to conduct themselves in ways that were not determined; their comportment and the import they attributed to things has been theirs all along. Mortals have always had this capacity of *bouleusis*, and *this* may be the most fundamental constraint

[310] In Euripides' *Chrysippus* Laius is also seen as tragically incontinent, knowing the right but not being able to hold back from doing the wrong, see Eur. fr. 841.

[311] 1304-7: ὥστε διολέσαι δόμους/ κἄμ', ὅστις ἄτεκνος ἀρσένων παίδων γεγὼς/ τῆς σῆς τόδ' ἔρνος, ὦ τάλαινα, νηδύος/ αἴσχιστα καὶ κάκιστα κατθανόνθ' ὁρῶ·.

[312] χρησμὸς ὡς λέγει Διός, 1333, πάλαι τάδε Ζεὺς οὐμὸς ἐπένευσεν πατήρ. 1349.

upon them: since choosing not to evaluate strongly and deliberate is itself a choice, humans cannot avoid their fate, which is to choose and be determined by the quality of their choices.

Aboulia, that could be a subtitle of *Bacchae*. The whole play is a dramatization of forms of will, of a god's willful objective and its "working out", *telesai*. It is a collision of wills. Human willfulness discovers through its enfeeblement and enchantment, through the spectacle of its violent disintegration in trance and frenzy, the priority of divine will – which only to have recognized had been enough. An attentive study of *Bacchae*, one open to not treating it only as a document in religious belief and practice, will cast a special light on the controversies in modern interpretation over the psychological, ethical reading of tragedy as dramatizing human subjects *qua* subjects. *Bacchae* is a portrait of human and divine desirousness. On the extent of agency it is as inconclusive as Aeschylus, as unclosed as any satisfying treatment of the subject, whose subjectivity is never done choosing how it will identify itself, how it must be.

Dramatists (good ones), even if they had such terms as 'free will' in their suite of philosophical tools, do not make their figures speak in those terms. Their mode is dramatic, not only didactic or heuristic. Instead their characters feel and explain and excuse themselves, recuse themselves or follow their own intentions in spite of what they know. They persuade each other or fail to persuade each other, they know what is prudent and what gravely dangerous, but follow an imperative which they feel is their own. If power to follow their own inclination, articulate or not, is denied them they feel something essential about themselves is being violated. The state of volitional enslavement or enchainment is unbearable. Choice and actions express and constitute the identities of persons in their own eyes and those of others. Agency is inextricable from what a person thinks it is.

3.3.12 Import

In his essay "Self-Interpreting Animals"[313], Taylor introduces further ideas with great power of illumination for an articulate reading of *Bacchae*. Emotions have objects, or as Brentano had first expressed it in the 19th Century, establishing an important premise of 20th Century phenomenology, subjects are "intentional", their experiences are 'towards' or necessarily *about* certain objects of experience.[314] Saying properly what feelings and motivations are like

[313] Taylor, 1985: 45-76.

[314] See Brentano, 1924-5: 124. Thought is always intentional, it is thought of or about an object of thinking, the "standard philosophical term for aboutness is *intentionality*, derived from 'intendere arcum', aim an arrow, so Dennett, 1991: 333. See for a technical definition of "intentionality" from the point of view of the natural scientist Dennett, 1981: 4 and more comprehensively his *The Intentional Stance,* 1987.

"involves expressing or making explicit a judgement about the object they bear on."[315] Emotions do not, however, simply have objects, but more precisely, are situational; they are "affective modes of awareness of situation"[316]. To be moved means to apprehend the quality or properties of a certain situation and this is not neutral – experiencing a given emotion is "to be aware of our situation" as having a certain quality, to have judged it as such. This may sound to many as excessively "intellectual", as an underestimation of the spontaneous character of most experience. The philosophical point, which I am less concerned to prove in its universal validity is, however, of special pertinency in discussing drama, in which there can be no question that the audience is "aware" of situations, judging them and being guided to judge them in certain ways, in order to feel certain affects.

The quality or property judged as defining a given situation (as, for example, humiliating, shameful, outrageous, humorous), Taylor designates as its *import*: "By 'import' I mean a way in which something can be of relevance or of importance to the desires or purposes or aspirations or feelings of a subject; or otherwise put, a property of something whereby it is a matter of non-indifference to a subject."[317] Identifying the import is not simply the passive registering of a felt experience but active; it entails the 'picking out' of what does, could or should give grounds for having a certain feeling in a situation: "saying what an emotion is like involves making *explicit the sense of the situation it incorporates*, or, in our present terms, the import of the situation as we experience it."[318] Import gives grounds for feeling a certain way, it is different from simply feeling a certain way: "experiencing our situation as bearing a certain import, where for the ascription of the import it is not sufficient just that I feel this way, but rather *the import gives the grounds or basis for the feeling*."[319]. Pentheus reads his situation, he picks out exactly what about Teiresias and Kadmos makes them embarrassing, why they are shameless. He thinks that a man who comports himself as a woman or is too credulous or not sufficiently self-assertive is a man compromised and thus finds the situation with Dionysus intolerable. Dionysus wants to defend his mother's honour and recoup his own status; the situation of mortals at Thebes is insulting, it has this import for him most decisively.

Consciousness and the 'objects of consciousness' being his constant object of inquiry, of great interest to questions of the cognitive dimensions of religion and theatrical experience is Dennett, 1991. On *aboutness* see Dennett, 1987 passim with "Reflections: about aboutness" at 203-11.

[315] Taylor, 1985: 47.

[316] Taylor, 1985: 48.

[317] Taylor, 1985: 48.

[318] Taylor, 1985: 48.

[319] Taylor, 1985: 49.

Since in experiencing an emotion, through the experience of the import of a situation, is involved a judgement, it stands to reason that the import of a situation can be misjudged. In the experience of physical pain, by contrast, there is no question of judgement. Similarly, one could objectively describe pain, its causes and effects, but sensation is very different from import. A physical sensation like pain does not depend on our notion of pain. Shame and its presence in a given context depend on our idea of what is shameful. We can determine, through questioning, that it were irrational to allow ourselves to feel shame in a certain situation. Attic drama demands just such a 'picking out', a reading of situations as having certain imports. It is a 'making explicit of the sense of the situation it incorporates'. It does not simply push rhetorical emotional buttons in a manipulative way, as for example Alfred Hitchcock famously fantasized about doing to audiences[320].

Tragedy is fundamentally situational in this sense of Taylor's. In the *theatron* – a kind of visualizing *bouleutērion* – it makes explicit, *emphanes*, the nature of affect, and of experience as affective condition. Its ambition is, in its complex and multi-perspectival way, to make existence itself the explicated situation, the sense of which it incorporates. Thus is Tragedy concerned with modes of life and its tutor is Dionysus, the great manifester, in whose art of drama, situations of importance are realized. They make evident their own import and the nature of the import that the adjudicating audience ascribes. Modern objectivist theories such as behaviourism[321], that seek to explain "human motivation in terms, say, of underlying physical states" want to separate the subject from its subject experience, define knowledge as "experience-independent"[322]. Imports, however, are essentially "experience-dependent properties".

Here is that familiar determining bifurcation again: primary order – secondary order knowledge; subjective – objective; independent or dependent of experience; *exothēn – endothēn*. The conception of the subject and its place and role, the nature of its being or not being bound up in its experiences will be determining for our conclusions. For Tragedy we need a phenomenological hermeneutic, for this is no art of clear distinctions between persons and objects of experience. At its very heart is just that sense of situational import as delineated by Taylor in his essay. The very ambiguity of Dionysus, the entanglement in his vicinity of persons – that *palē, sumplegma* – in situations of tragical dilemma and the threads of judgement, by which persons are bound or not bound to their own acts and choices: these

[320] Horror is much closer to Comedy as a genre than Tragedy. Comedy appeals at a certain level through something reflexive, humour; it elicits the more spontaneous reaction of laughter. Tragedy is more reflective, where one does not only feel but sympathizes (identifies and evaluates), summons the response of judgement through its construction of situations of *importance*.

[321] " . . . the strange continuing obsession with this wildly implausible approach to the science of man", Taylor, 1985: 51.

[322] Taylor, 1985: 50.

are just those elements, the very core of Tragic drama, which solicit from the audience evaluation and judgement. His theatre and his presence becomes a kind of ethical and pedagogical prosthesis, by which the citizenry may access knowledge, *mathos*, through the simulated *pathos* of others.

3.3.13 Subject-Reference

Shame is central in the action and motivations of *Bacchae*, and more broadly too for the understanding of Greek culture[323]. Shame is useful in illustrating what Taylor designates the "subject-referring properties" of imports. Nothing is objectively shameful. Shame is always the experience of shame: such as "a subject experiences in relation to a dimension of his existence as a subject"[324]. Feeling a sense of shame means necessarily having a sense of the meaning of things, the significance which, for me and my culture, they express. If I am one who runs away from battle, plucks my hair and speaks in a high voice, steals clothes from dressing rooms or steals sacrifices meant for the gods, or exploits others instrumentally for the accomplishment of my own plans – these things are shameful in my eyes and those of my social others because of the meaning that things have for us.

Of certain objects of shame in given situations Taylor writes, "These properties are thus only demeaning for a subject for whom things can have this kind of meaning. But things can have this kind of meaning only for a subject in whose form of life there figures an aspiration to dignity, to be a presence among men which commands respect."[325] For things to have meaning in this way then, to have this aspiration and to feel the pressure of shame and the pull of dignity, one must be a "subject of awareness, of experience". The existence of an emotion like shame is only possible through the existence of aware, self-reflexive beings[326]. But just as there may be new, unforeseen forms of knowledge and ignorance, there may too come different reasons for shame. Pentheus is not self-reflexive in an original way, he fails to

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[323] See especially Dodds, 1951; Adkins, 1960; and Cairns, 1993.

[324] Taylor, 1985: 53. In another, related context, discussing the nature and science of consciousness, Dennett describes "phenomena that depend on their concepts", such as love and money. He writes: "On the view of consciousness I will develop in this book, it turns out that consciousness, like love and money, is a phenomenon that does indeed depend to a surprising extent on its associated concepts. Although, like love, it has an elaborate biological base, like money, some of its most significant features are borne along on the culture, not simply inherent, somehow, in the physical structure of its instances.", Dennett, 1991: 24.

[325] Taylor, 1985: 53.

[326] ". . . the import shameful can be explicated only by reference to a subject who experiences his world in a certain way. . . emerging here is not the banal truism that nothing has the import shameful except for a subject for whom there are imports . . . Rather the point is that the term 'shameful' has no sense outside of a world in which there is *a subject for whom things have certain (emotional) meanings.* For the (linguistic) meaning of 'shameful' can only be explicated with reference to a subject for whom these (emotional) meanings have weight, and if there were no such subjects, the term itself would lack sense." Taylor, 1985: 53.

discern unfamiliar reasons for shame and kind of unestablished values or non-obvious emotional logic. Import terms such as 'shameful', depend for their sense on subjects who experience the import as such. We could explain 'fear' to an alien; we could explain its physiology as a reaction, but never "this human business of shame and humiliation". Import defines how situations are "relevant to our purpose or desires, or aspirations"[327]. Purposive, evaluative, reflexive beings alone find themselves in situations of meaningful import.

With a strongly felt sense of aggrieved *timē*, Dionysus returns to the scene of his conception, the city of his birth and mother's death. His *telos* is definite – it originates in his sense of things, the sense of injured *aidōs*. This is just the god's very intelligibly human 'aspiration to dignity, to be a presence among men which commands respect'. Shame is an emotion that depends on "the experience subjects have of it", unlike measurable physiological phenomena, for example[328]. In accounting for the meaning of an emotion like shame, we must do precisely what Tragedy and Epic does, refer to "things – like our sense of dignity, of worth, of how we are seen by others – which are essentially bound up with the life of a subject of experience."[329]

Subject-referring properties are the topic of Tragedy. Its object is the subject *qua* subject. There is no objective account to be made of shame or honour, love or hate: these concern the peculiar experience of life of unique subjects in particular cultures at specific and unique times. The protagonists of Tragedy experience their situations as having a sense that inheres in that experience[330]. While gods or demons or contingency seem to stand and are behind certain motivations, actors and audience still read these situations as having certain meanings for them and these meanings residing in the situation's experience. However sadly they may seem to discover that they have been the playthings of gods or necessity, no figure in Tragic drama is satisfied to be borne along simply by events and circumstances, except when those are a pretext for acting in a certain way. It is their orientation towards their situations and their fates, in the articulateness which it gives them and which they in turn lend those, that protagonists are most agentful.[331]

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[327] Taylor, 1985: 53.

[328] But what I experience I can dissemble and falsify to others, in connection with this point consider the discussion of the "smile" and its inferring in § 5.5 below.

[329] Taylor, 1985: 53.

[330] Taylor, 1985: 53.

[331] For Giddens' definition of agency ("Agency refers to doing." Giddens, 1984: 10, reminiscent of Aristotle on Tragedy, which also is concerned primarily with showing 'doing', cf. Arist. *Poet.* 1449b 24-5 τραγῳδία μίμησις πράξεως σπουδαίας καὶ τελείας μέγεθος ἐχούσης . . . 36-8 ἐπεὶ δὲ πράξεώς ἐστι μίμησις, πράττεται δὲὑπὸ τινῶν πραττόντων, οὓς ἀνάγκη ποιούς τινας εἶναι κατά τε τὸ ἦθος καὶ τὴν διάνοιαν), see Giddens, 1984:1-16. He is concerned to distinguish agency and intentionality: "Agency refers not to the intentions people have in doing things but to their capability of doing those things in the first place . . . events of which an individual is the perpetrator . . . Whatever happened would not have happened if that individual had not intervened. Action is a continuous process, a flow, in which *the reflexive*

This has been a long and detailed detour. Taylor's ideas are richly relevant to Tragedy and especially to *Bacchae*, in which the problems of knowledge, evaluation, desire, various qualities of volition and different aspects of personhood – its nature, shape and destruction – form the very matter and substance of the work, the meaning of its actions. We always have a philosophical position which informs and, indeed, forms the interpretations we make of works of poetry or religious practices. It is crucial that we *take* (*proairein*) our positions and not only *have* them. The human story in *Bacchae* concerns qualities of choosing, the dangers of losing reflexivity (of awareness self and of others as *like self*), of inarticulacy. It concerns the magnetic powerfulness of the mind and its power of articulation and concealment as well as the charisma of animal presence and the fearsomeness of divine co-presence. The interpretation of Tragic poetry needs to frame a commensurately strong evaluation of the dramas of evaluators.

Now Taylor has been concerned to recuperate the value and authenticity of subjectivity from the vacuousness of objectivist, primary order, scientific modes of interpretation inappropriately applied to human doings. The detailed engagement here with his philosophy must not be seen as simply an attempt to swing the hermeneutic pendant back in the opposite direction. My aim is not to re-install the individual and its fate in the privileged seat, which remains better reserved for the priest of Dionysus. If anything, in the discussion of Dionysus and of Euripides' great and subtle dramatization of the Pentheus myth, we will not be tempted to come down either in favour of primary- or secondary-order forms of knowledge, to choose either between persons as subjects or objects of influence, but rather only to win new, more differentiated perspectives, fresh knowledge into the *intersubjectivity* – intercourse, communion, company, *homilia* – of human life as that is imitated in the Theatre of Dionysus. Tragedy envisages the human situation ever more richly in offering ever more perspectives on and within peculiar situations that come to serve as models for a whole – existence – which is only ever knowable in parts, in fragments and under the play of moving lights and shadows.

3.3.14 Dimension: Tragic Subjectivity as Depth

In his development of an ethics founded upon articulacy, knowledge and seeking, which is expressed in articulate and contrastive evaluation of values, Charles Taylor has sounded much like the 5th Century Socrates. By the last years of the Peloponnesian War, Euripides has

monitoring which the individual maintains is fundamental to the control of the body that actors ordinarily sustain throughout day-to-day-lives." Giddens, 1984:9.

left Athens, possibly some kind of exile from the *polis* that had not recognized him. He would die in 406 BCE. Socrates, who more than likely sat in the theatre in 405 BCE and watched the posthumous premier of *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Alcmeon at Corinth* and *Bacchae*, is a figure whose presence is, of course, felt through the entire history of Western philosophy too. The Russian-doll-like 'satyr', who was immortalized in Plato's *Symposium*, a work set in 405 BCE, would himself be unrecognized by Athens, a gadfly pricking his fellow citizens to become stronger evaluators. He would be sentenced to die in 399 BCE. The atheist Diagoras of Melos, who had been exiled from Athens for impugning the Mysteries in his poetry, was regularly derided by Aristophanes and others. Nicomachus, that luckless re-organizer of the sacral calendar, would also be prosecuted, not long after, for the innovations in religious practices at Athens that he had merely recorded[332].

Reading Taylor alongside Euripides, it comes to seem that the kind of agency he describes is just that kind of agency explored by the poet in this city of law-courts and their such scrupulously fine differentiations in qualities of agentfulness. Aristotle was heir to this intellectual culture and its peculiar ethical accents. It is not surprising that he should be so focused in his work on ethics with the nature and quality of agency and its relationship to knowledge and ignorance, for that is a relationship and a problem expressed and explored in multifold ways in Attic Drama, on which of course he was also such an expert and careful analyst.

The most important questions that face humans as persons – kin, citizens and reflexive beings concerned with the import of their existence – are just those most difficult to respond to. They are also the ones that the tragic poet in his work, which naturally takes on all the problems of the religiosity out of which it first issued will be most concerned to grapple with. That religiosity is defined by *adēlotes*, non-obviousness or unclearness of the gods; the interactiveness and incessant communicativeness of humans as social beings and their projections of similar such deities; and their framing of 'ultimate concerns'[333]. Agency in the philosophical vision of Socrates, as too in the ethical vision of Euripides, inheres in the active discernment of the good and its higher modes of life. Just so in Taylor:

> Now precisely these deepest evaluations are the ones which are least clear, least articulated, *most easily subject to illusion and distortion*. It is those which are closest to what I am as a subject, in the sense that shorn of them I would break down as a person, which are among *the hardest for me to be clear about*.

[332] Diagoras: Ar. *Ran.* 320, *Nub.* 830, *Av.* 1073-4, Hermippus fr. 43. On Nicomachus, see Lysias 30 and on the prosecution of Lysias and its significance for the history of Greek religion, see Parker, 1996: 152-3.

[333] Burkert, 1996: 4-8.

> Thus the question can always be posed: ought I to re-evaluate my most basic evaluations? Have I really understood what is *essential to my identity*? Have I truly determined what I sense to be the *highest mode of life*?
> Now this kind of re-evaluation will be radical; not in the sense of radical choice, however, that we *choose without criteria*; but rather in the sense that our looking again can be so undertaken that in principle *no formulations are considered unrevisable*.[334]

Religion can urge mortals to be strong evaluators, that is to say, autonomously moral. Alternatively it can establish a noble, strong evaluation as a foundational belief and enforce it as a self-evident truth, (and anticipate an obedience or adherence in which is implicit at least the possibility of a formalism, which is weakly evaluative, that of only the *narthēkophoros*[335]). Two kinds of things it often ask are: that its worshippers be articulators (reasoning out the good in any given peculiar situation) or accept an original articulation (on faith, by revelation, to live by rules). The depth of Greek Tragedy consists in its *interpretant* character: Tragedy interprets, it is not simply an inert object, which we interpret; it is a supreme act of agentful interpretation of values, knowledge and of its own meaning and the meaning of its god, Dionysus. It does not simply celebrate or entrench an established moral code, but re-articulates and calls for a like articulacy from its audiences. In *Bacchae* we are not just presented with, say, a coded dramatization of mystery initiation, or an unproblematic homily on Dionysiac rites. Instead we are presented with god and mortal as problems, an open problem that invites us not just to assent or dissent, to approve or disapprove but consciously to become judges of situations, to be originally evaluative and presumably to extend such evaluative originality and strength to ourselves, our lives as mortal persons in the common life of the super-subjective *polis* person.

3.4 Summary

Agency is a question of articulacy, the capacity to contrastively evaluate between desires. Being an agent means adopting hierarchies of values. Most of human life is lived out *implicitly*: in routinized states of reflex, habit and what Giddens called the "practical consciousness" as distinguished from the "discursive consciousness"[336]. Drama is a discursive moment. It aims to be a moment that endures. It seems to encourage the spectator to become a living theatre, unto itself, to become perpetually *discursive* as to itself, taking an articulate perspective on its existence, becoming ethical by knowing itself. Agency is a

[334] My italics, Taylor, 1985: 40.

[335] See § 2.5 n. 271 on Pl. *Phd*. 69c 8 – d 2.

[336] See Giddens, 1984: 41-5.

potential of persons. It is a cognitive and volitional potentiality, not a phenomenal property of persons. It is activated though the confrontation with alternative choices, desires, options. An all-important point about human lives is the dynamism of their ethical environment. Their lot is to be always moving, to be radically subject to time. They habitually seek to define things by lifting them out of the frustratingly strong current of time.

One is not either an agent or not an agent, but by turns more or less agentful at any given moment. There is an ambiguity latent in persons, which is a function of the potential character of agency. In a single life a person is now agentful, now not. In sleep, drunkenness, childhood, *mania*, inspiration, religious ecstacy – one experiences the annulment and/or the enhancement of one's mental powers and emotional receptiveness. The capacity for insight into, or the state of being commensurate with, ordinarily concealed truths about self and others, waxes and wanes. The high and low moments of knowledgeability are also typically moments of crisis. The choice one makes, the degree to which one chooses, "shows" *ēthos*, as Aristotle put it.

The division between mortals and gods is paradoxically both untrespassed *and* permeable. Gods are persons but not agents. They are not strong evaluators. They are not subject as mortals are, to time and the horizontal, biographical perspective, through which humans learn and deepen through self-reflexivity. Gods have only the vertical perspective, a privileged knowledge over others. They are not constrained by events and limitation to take a critical, evaluative perspective on self. Humans are immersed amongst others and immersed in themselves. They have not the infinite temporal extension of immortals. Instead of extension over time, they have the opportunity only for something like spatial depth in time, which is the capacity for knowledge of self and learning about value through experience. This is the effect of a moral and intellectual excavation, which is produced by the search for value.

In this chapter, *Bacchae* has been subjected to an examination on the terms of the Taylorian philosophy of agency. Just as values are not foregone knowledge, so are the nature of tragic personhood and the agency expressed through choice and attitudes not settled or incontrovertible. Euripides is concerned in *Bacchae* as in his other plays, with values and evaluation and the meaning and consequences of choices and attitudes. These are revealed in crises. The arrival of a god in the city is a crisis that will be beneficial or destructive. It will depend on what mortals do, how they react, what quality of relation they desire and can be capable of desiring.

Mortals are deeply social, but their social life is troubled. They form a social life even unto their individual selves, and that too is troubled: the *polis* of the self is unruly. How and whether individual persons take counsel with themselves, whether they deny their desires or articulately examine them, whether they form a unanimous *thiasos* or sow the autocrat's discord – these will be determining for their fates. Pentheus will become a ruined person and Thebes a ruined city. The House of Kadmos will have reeled and toppled, reduced to rubble by the end as Semelē's house had been at the opening. Humans have been thwarted by their desires, they have not understood what was their true self-interest. In the next section we turn further from questions of agency and the desire and its handling, which have been so fundamental for the view the tragic poet has of his tragic persons, to questions concerning the detection, inference and interpretation of persons and motivations. Self-interest and the choices and values to which they ought to commit persons are hard to locate and define because personhood itself is terminally *vague*. Identity is an elusive property; person or subjectivity is difficult to comprehend in the first place. In the following chapters, Part II, we study the riddles of the ontology of person in *Bacchae*, another dimension of the problem of agency and value which is central in *Bacchae*.

The phenomenon of Dionysus compels certain questions about the communicability of values and the readability or intelligibility of persons. In the next chapter we shall see that *predictability* has been an essential idea for theorists of religion, who have tried to account for the near universal human reflex to anthropomorphize, to make intelligible and predictable, by populating the cosmos with divine persons. Dionysus' unpredictability makes a theme out of prediction, just as his not being apprehended and understood brings the problem of clarity and intelligibility into the centre of the interpretation of his drama. Dionysus comes amongst humans looking mortal, wearing a human form and even adopting a 'man's nature'. The problem of recognition is the problem of knowledge and inference – how mortals ought to know gods and how they construe persons generally is the operative question in the vicinity of Dionysus. In the following chapter we examine the forms of inference required to discern the presence of human and divine personhood.

Part II
Tragic Persons

4

Adēlotes: Belief and the Uncertainty of Persons[1]

σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος[2]

4.1 Introduction: seeing hearts and minds as objects

In the previous chapters we have been concerned with the nature and quality of agency as ethical potential, a defining element of the Tragic subject. From this point on it is with the detection of agency and the identity of person in others that we are concerned. We turn from the psychology and ethics of volition to a social and cognitive anthropology of personhood. Before even arriving at that stage where we reflect on the character of agency and its relative quality and value, how do we know that others have the potential for agency at all? Individuals feel that they have minds, but how do they know others do too? Certainly raving women, drunken men or tyrants intoxicated with power can seem not to be fully human, diminished in respect of the autonomy and reflexivity which we discern as the mark of "agentful" persons and "agentful" behaviour.

Classical scholars have argued about the depth of characters represented in Drama, from Aeschylus, through Shakespeare, Eugene O'Neill and to contemporary cinema[3]. The persons of poetry are fictions. Yet the persons of history – real persons – are in certain senses fictions too. At any rate their personhood is composed, in part, of the same stuff as fictional persons: mind, which is most readily discernible through language. We may venture so far as to say that this 'stuff' is language. At any rate, to one another historical persons have the same consistency, we can say, as poetic persons, the same texture. That is so at least in their manner of being apprehended by other persons. The social world is very like, if not

[1] "Unclearness", "opaqueness", "uncertainty", see above p. 150 n. 332 on Burkert's employment of *adēlotes* as one of the three defining phenomena by which to account for religion.

[2] "The dark contains solemnity" 486.

[3] Easterling, 1973, Gould, 1978, the best recent work on character in *Bacchae* is Thumiger, 2007.

identical, to the virtual social worlds of dramatic mimesis, at least in regard to our manner of apprehending others. John Gould wrote that we "cannot follow home" characters in a play[4]. The humans amongst whom we live are, so the modern received opinion runs, unique and infinitely deep containing intrinsic value. Perhaps they are. How we could ever know their depths, however, is not very different to how we would "know" characters in plays. Even if we followed them home, we always remain "outside" our historical fellows' minds. Here I discuss knowledge and recognition of subjectivity in terms of *the manner of accessing others* in the social context, which is the only context of meaningful human existence.

At the heart of the social world, between agents, is uncertainty, *adēlotes,* instability, *to sphaleron*, and peril, *kindunos*. In Tragedy one way in which this is expressed is through the perennial searching after clarity. Humans read one another as having minds and intentions. These are not always manifest; they are concealed, *krupton*, dissimulable, *plaston*, and dissembling, *eirōnikon*. Minds are hard to read, all the more so since they are always so inchoate and 'coming into being' – *aei epigignomena*[5] – so unarticulated, opaque even to themselves. Life amongst others is adumbrated by the problem of accessibility to what *securely corresponds to reality*, what is *bebaion*, safe, and reliable, *piston*. Discerning what is truly valuable and what is truly true is difficult: *ta aie epigignomena* comprises also *ta epiphainomena*, that which is apparent but potentially misleading. Since value is a function of judgements and relations, it is all the more challenging a fact of existence that persons are not evident in a simple way and that social actors are both compelled to anticipate intentionality and ignorant of the quality and nature of the intentions of their social others. Human life, from one perspective, is made up of constant *monitoring* of self and other, according to Giddens and Goffman before him[6]. Social actors perpetually interpret one another, construe the likely intentions of others and read their acts and behaviours as effects of causes presumed to be ultimately intelligible, even if not immediately apparent as such. This is definitive for social "competence":

> In circumstances of interaction – encounters and episodes – the reflexive monitoring of action typically, and again routinely, incorporates the monitoring of the setting of such interaction . . . this phenomenon is basic to the interpolation of action within the time-space relations of what I shall call co-presence. The rationalization of action,

[4] Gould, 1978.

[5] I draw this phrase from the remark in Thucydides' that as in art so in politics what should always hold sway is "the new", or what is "ever happening", "always just coming about", see Thuc. 1.71.3.1: ἀνάγκη δὲ ὥσπερ τέχνης αἰεὶ τὰ ἐπιγιγνόμενα κρατεῖν.

[6] Giddens, 1984: 43-4 "the essential importance of the reflexive monitoring of conduct in the day-to-day continuity of social life"; Goffman, 1959.

> within the diversity of circumstances of interaction, is the principal basis upon which the generalized 'competence' of actors is evaluated by others.[7]

We do not know, or cannot agree, if we can ever know what it feels like, say, to be a bat[8]. We do however, fairly unproblematically, assume that we do know what it is not to be a fully human subject, a person like ourselves. We also feel – the point may seem too obvious to need making and yet it is important here – that we can understand the motives of human others and we instinctively behave as if their acts are motivated – that is, as if they have intentions, objects of consciousness. We know, without having to be cognitive scientists or philosophers, what it feels like to be a person. We know furthermore that we can be induced to or choose to see others as non-persons, not as the subjects who feel, as we do. We can also be induced to treat non-persons – idols, the dead, art works – as if they were in fact persons, having intentions and responses and life – as if beings having minds.

The potential or the choice to see others as subjects, to feel pity for them and fear inspired on their behalf stands, in Greek drama, in contrast with the refusal or the inability to do so. Odysseus is perhaps the very pattern of the man who is so impressive but also so fearsomely ruthless in his ability, not only to suspend and "edit" his own desires as he does in Homer[9], but to suspend, as he is depicted in Tragedy, any sense of the personhood or the subjectivity of others[10]. To the Odysseus of Tragedy, as to the Odysseus of Horkheimer and Adorno's critique[11], other persons are objects, instruments only for the realization of his own objectives. He is, in Tragedy, a man with *telē* but little or only the most private, hermetically sealed and hidden affective life.

The first documentary film that was recognized with an Academy Award was called *Hearts and Minds*, 1974[12]. There is a memorable passage of scenes in this film, in which an interview with an American *basileus*, General William Westmoreland, is intercut with a scene of purest tragedy. It occurs immediately after an attack on a village in Vietnam – there is screaming and mourning, utter aporia. The general opines that the Vietnamese have different attitudes towards death, towards their own lives and their families. People here are being naturally defined and, essentially, define themselves, in terms of the nature and quality of their

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[7] Giddens, 1984: 4.

[8] Cf. Thomas Nagel's famous essay "What is it Like to be a Bat", 1974; see also Budelmann & Easterling, 2010: "Reading Minds in Greek Tragedy", which contains also useful list of works on cognitive science that are fruitfully to be brought to bear on Greek poetry, also Larson's recent *Understanding Greek Religion: a cognitive approach*, 2016.

[9] See above p. 88.

[10] On Odysseus in Tragedy, see p. 69 n. 108, p.89 n. 195; p. 165, p. 180 n. 188.

[11] Horkheimer & Adorno, 1944: "Exkurs I: Odysseus oder Mythos und Aufklärung".

[12] *Hearts and Minds* Directed by Peter Davis, 1974.

relations with others, and especially their closest others, kin – how they define and evaluate their relations is inseparable from their identities. Life, supposedly, does not have the same meaning or value to the Vietnamese, they do not care as Western people do, about their children or one another, so utterly other are they to Americans. Westmoreland expects that we will get it. He thinks we will understand what he is saying, that is, that we can define people through the manner in which they define themselves through their relations with others. The coolly authoritative general explains: "Well, the oriental does not put the same high price on life as does the Westerner . . . life is cheap, life is plentiful . . . as the philosophy of the Orient expresses it, life is not important"[13].

The master of this army, so highly trained and well-equipped to get "missions accomplished", to pragmatically see off threats, sees his *enemy* as the instrumentalist, the being of diminished subjectivity, which means defunct inter-subjectivity, a barbarous indifference to what, so naturally Westerners think, is most important in life and is so. His talk (sitting in an idyllic landscape scene by a languid river), is spliced with the mourning screams, scenes of a highly *tragic* character. The Vietnamese village is burying its dead lost in a US bombing raid – wives, fathers, children, relations, only bodies wrapped and to be deposited in holes cut in the earth. There is no morgue, no container for the corpse, that will arrest its alarming decomposition. Co-presents are suddenly absent, the sight of the corpse reminds us of something both banal and alarming: the body was not the whole person, only a *part* of its identity. At another point in the film a Vietnamese man is addressing the camera turned on him, utterly at a loss; he cannot believe what is happening to him, his bereavement. The passionate and utterly desperate woe – *penthos* – over this unbearable loss leaves the viewer, especially in contrast with the cold, calculating nonsense of the general, (who sits calmly – *hesuchos thasson*[14] – in his summer suit, his placid manner testifying to his mastery of situations), in a state of unforgettable aporia. The general is an articulate Odysseus figure, a utilitarian with a concept of utilitarianism, which he ascribes to others, while his own goals, we are expected to presume, issue from deeper moral sources.[15]

[13] *Hearts and Minds* circa 01:43.

[14] 622.

[15] Tragedy is very often the spectacle of people who are deeply sympathetic through their own deep attachment to people they care about, it is nearly everywhere in Tragedy and this is why the reverse, people who feel nothing and worse than nothing for those persons usually love, is so shocking. So, for example, are the scenes so touching at Soph. *OC* where Oedipus tells Theseus of his love for his children, Soph. *OC* 1119-38. See in her recent discussion of the gods in Euripides, on *Bacchae* and its final scene, Lefkowitz, 2016: 147 "The mortals' repeated expressions of affection for each other help to set into clear relief the stark contrast between the natures of gods and mortals. The portrayal of their affection for one another allows the audience to see some the ways [sic] in which humans can try to overcome even the most terrible aspects of their fate simply by enduring and caring for each other."

The Persians in Aeschylus may have their exotic colouring, but like Trojan Andromache and Hecuba or Colchian Medea in Euripides or most impressively like the Asian Hector and his father Priam in Homer, are no bats living in Cyclopes' caves. They are persons presented as intelligible, sympathetic, having a mixture of motives and feeling very deeply for those they love and who love them, and an attachment to their own lives and their quality. Out of perhaps the most vivid poetry ever written, some of the most memorable scenes are those of Hector with his wife and son in *Iliad* 6[16], and the pathos of Priam[17]. Things *matter* and very deeply to those *barbaroi*, non-Greeks, and that is the most identifiable quality about them (the quality that we most easily identify and by which they will become identified).

We can imagine what it is that others feel but also what it is not to feel. Achilles wishing to reduce Hector as absolutely and mercilessly as possible to the most degraded object is something we also find intelligible, even if we find it repugnant[18].Tragedy, successor of epic, presents both sympathetic figures and unsympathetic, and its realism is that often it shows characters who can be either and who are by turns – *en merei*[19] – one way now and another way after.

Pentheus seems to be a figure who sees others as objects amongst other objects. This, in its most extreme version, is the nightmare of the hero in Greek poetry – to become some person's property or to be reduced to an object. Greek heroes find most horrific the idea of being left as fodder for wild beasts, to be left unprocessed, so to speak, uninducted – *atelestos* – into the next phase of existence, to dwell permanently in the memories of one's people and as a shade in Hades. Pentheus' fate then, since this is the ironic world of Tragedy, is to become such an object. For by the end, shredded to pieces of meat by his own family, he is reduced not even to the status of an object, (which has at least the minimal quality of "unity", coherence with itself in space, and in time "persistence" or "object permanence"[20]), but to abject matter: scattered on the ground – κεῖται δὲ χωρὶς σῶμα, 1137 – the contemptible, decomposing 'objects' or goals not of any human or divine intention and attention, but only of the appetites of wild animals[21].

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[16] Hom. *Il.* 6. 390-493.

[17] Hom. *Il.* 24. 507-70.

[18]See Hom. *Il.* 24. 1-24, for Achilles' grief and the abuse of Hector's corpse, which he uses to serve for an emotional outlet.

[19] See below § 7.1.

[20] Strawson, 2009: 65-7 "Thing" and on "The Persistence Belief", see 217-64. "Object permanence", the recognition in a child that objects do not depend on its apprehending of those objects but endure independently of itself is an essential idea in the very widely influential work of the Swiss cognitive psychologist Jean Piaget, see Piaget, 1937, *La construction du réel chez l'enfant*. His *La représentation du monde chez l'enfant* (Paris, 1947) is also a key work; in it he develops his notions of the child as passing through stages towards its fuller grasp of causality: the child exhibits "realism", "animism" and "artificialism". These intriguing ideas were an important source for Guthrie, cited below, in his (cognitive psychological) argument on the congenital anthropomorphism by which he accounts for the belief in divinity.

[21] 1125-39, 1216-21.

He had read his situation as a hunt, the targeting of persons as objects. The hunt and its luckless hunters, is the poet's model of man as "intentional" – someone who *aims* at prey, the objects of his desire taken by stealth, cunning, technology or violence[22]. Dennett in his discussion of intentionality notes that "intend" itself derives from a hunting term, "to draw and point a bow", *intendere arcum in*[23]. Tragedy, the theatre of complex qualities of agency, is the art defined by such disastrous hunts and problematic intentions as exemplified in figures like Oedipus, vaunting Actaeon and Pentheus[24].

At the opening of *Bacchae* the bacchants were wild animals to be brought back into the domestic sphere, the environment brought under the sway of the human intentional economy. Pentheus wants Dionysus hunted down and locked up with the tamed animals that serve human purpose[25]. To the last, even when subject to the "light madness" with which Dionysus has touched him (for touch is infectious in this world[26]), Pentheus sees others as wild animals to be hunted and caught[27]. Ultimately, he himself will be attacked and killed by maenads who hunt him down as an animal prey. They cannot recognize his human visage and voice[28]. He will be carried back, his head a trophy, an extinguished subject, an invalidated person, held up for all to see, a misapprehended object, a prey or prize[29].

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[22] On the "hunting model", literal meaning and figurative of such scenes in *Bacchae,* see Thumiger, 2006.

[23] See Dennett, 1991: 333, "The standard philosophical term for 'aboutness' is *intentionality*, and according to Elizabeth Anscombe (1965) it "comes by metaphor" from the Latin, *intendere arcum in*, which means to aim a bow and arrow at (something). This image of aiming or directedness is central in most philosophical discussions of intentionality, but in general philosophers have traded in the complex process of aiming a real arrow for a mere 'logical' arrow, a foundational or primitive relation, made all the more mysterious by its supposed simplicity. How *could* something in your head point this abstract arrow at a thing in the world?"

[24] *Ichneuein*: "track", "hunt down", means to catch by inferring presence from traces left. The chorus in *OT* wishes to "hunt down the *adēlon* man", whom they do not yet know is the manifest man who is their king, Sop. *OT* 475-6: τὸν ἄδη- / λον ἄνδρα πάντ' ἰχνεύειν·. Pentheus has wanted the *xenos* hunted down, *exichneuein*, from the outset, 352-3: οἱ δ' ἀνὰ πόλιν στείχοντες ἐξιχνεύσατε / τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον. Dionysus will counsel darkly, when he has just begun his bewitchment of the king, that the maenads will "hunt you down even if you should go secretly", 817: ἀλλ' ἐξιχνεύσουσίν σε, κἂν ἔλθηις λάθραι. Pentheus is the prey in this hunt because he has failed to understand the nature and significance of his own and of Dionysus' intentions and the fact that one's "real" identity is one's *intentional identity*. As much as the figurative hunter, Pentheus, literal hunters are typically imprudent "vaunters" in *Bacchae*: 337-40, where Actaeon κομπάσαντ' ἐν ὀργάσιν, 340 and 1233-7, Agauē deluded thinks her father "may brag", at having such a fine hunter for daughter, πάτερ, μέγιστον κομπάσαι πάρεστί σοι, 1233.

[25] 509-10: χώρει· καθείρξατ' αὐτὸν ἱππικαῖς πέλας / φάτναισιν, ὡς ἂν σκότιον εἰσορᾶι κνέφας.

[26] Touch: note Pentheus' hyper-sensitivity to the dangers of touch; at 343-4 he fears the bacchant contact and the chance that they should "wipe off [*exomorxēi*] your folly on me": οὐ μὴ προσοίσεις χεῖρα, βακχεύσεις δ' ἰών, / μηδ' ἐξομόρξηι μωρίαν τὴν σὴν ἐμοί;

[27] 957-8.

[28] 1115-24. See also Chapter 6 on face and voice.

[29] Vividly and extensively at 1197-1243.

In *Bacchae* we are made to see how human persons can be like animals, can have the grace and strength and beauty of animals, their spontaneity and freedom from deliberation and calculation. The bacchants are leaping buck and they clothe themselves not in the product of human manufacture, textiles, but becoming wild are also covered in the skins of undomesticated animals[30]. They are the most extreme instance of the fantasy of *theriomorphosis*, the utopia of an existence liberated from time, consciousness of self and other, and all the burden of sociality. Recognizing Dionysus has meant a suspension of the weight of social recognition of self and others, a suspension of social and cognitive vigilance. The deranged women of Thebes abandon their human young to run in the mountains, where they are seen to breast-feed wild animals, bind their dress with living snakes and respond only to inarticulate, animal voices[31]. Kadmos, whose sister had been spirited off by Zeus in the shape of a bull, Kadmos who originally killed the serpent and sowed Thebes with its teeth to engender an earth-born race, and Harmonia, herself the daughter of a god, Ares – this couple will at the culmination of the play, themselves face a literal *theriomorphosis*: becoming serpents at the head of an army of mixed foreign peoples[32].

Dionysus, who has come to reveal his inner identity, his personal and natural relation to Thebans and to Zeus, the truth or depth of his mother's motivations and the humanness, for all its savagery – *to omēstes* – of his own motivations, is himself very strongly associated with wild animals, creatures of pure externality. His effect also is to give the ambiguous gift to humans of animal vitality, a temporary suspension of time and consciousness of self, and therefore of others as selves. In Dionysus we begin to discern what wildness is and what consciousness, how we distinguish others as persons, what it is about ourselves and others that we identify as "person", what the threads are that bind subjects in complex inter-subjectivity. At the centre of this is the mind. This is fundamental but vague. It is hard to locate, hard to define and hard to know. On its ability to recognize depends so much. It must recognize others and recognize itself. It must recognize the likeness of others and self, and out of this ongoing recognition and interpretation constantly issues the human world, a strange admixture of the virtual and the concrete – the fluid and by turns congealed – constantly modified, interminably recursive. The problematic and unreliable recognition at the centre of human sociality is also the theme at the centre of *Bacchae*, a tragic episode from the life of a god who travels the world with the objective of being recognized truly.

[30] See § 3.2.2 p. 145 n. 40 and § 5.4 p. 321 n. 93.

[31] 689-91: ἡ σὴ δὲ μήτηρ ὠλόλυξεν ἐν μέσαις/ σταθεῖσα βάκχαις ἐξ ὕπνου κινεῖν δέμας, / μυκήμαθ' ὡς ἤκουσε κεροφόρων βοῶν. On the significance of the spatial configuration of city and mounatin, see Segal, 1997 [1982]: 78-124; and Friedrich, 1988.

[32] 1330-39, 1352-62.

4.2.1 Anticipating Intentionality: Theory of Mind

Recognizing Dionysus will mean recognizing him as person with divine identity. To recognize means to apprehend the intentional identity of Dionysus. Thebes is a supra-generational person, the 'person' of the city[33]. Does Thebes, if a kind of 'person' (having and giving identity, desiring and making judgements and choices), have a mind, we may ask. Customs, rites, traditions, in a sense these represent something like the externalized 'mind' of a community, since they trace values, desires and intentions and are expressed in language and symbol. This is a personhood that does seem to exist. Indeed, it is no more virtual than the mind of an individual; even, since so concretely and multifariously instantiated, much more 'real', in the sense of enduring and stable, than the individual person and its 'merely subjective' mind.

It is the virtual mind, the whole complex of intentions and their embodied traces, an order that subsists between subjects, which is the *nomoi* or *patrioi paradochai*. This is the 'living tradition', a web of relations and practices between the living and dead and not yet born, we call culture. Dionysus, the institutor of consummative rites – *teletai* – that bind together individual *psuchai*,[34] into the unified person of the throng, *thiasos*; a god whose bacchants constitute a "community of the holy proclamation"[35]; who smoothes away distinction and redefines persons by just one single criterion – not by gender, age, class, ethnicity[36], but by whether they be mortal or immortal: this is the god of the intersubjective. He brings together inside and outside in another important way: in fusing together or smoothing out the difference, between the mind of individuals and the mind of the body politic.

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[33] Thebes as person: ὦ Σεμέλας τροφοὶ Θῆ- / βαι (105-6), 1036-8: Ag. Θήβας δ' ἀνάνδρους ὧδ' ἄγεις <×–⏑–/ ×–⏑– ×–⏑– ×–⏑–>;/ Ch. ὁ Διόνυσος ὁ Διόνυσος οὐ Θῆβαι / κράτος ἔχουσ' ἐμόν, 39: δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, 50-2: ἣν δὲ Θηβαίων πόλις / ὀργῆι σὺν ὅπλοις ἐξ ὄρους βάκχας ἄγειν / ζητῆι, 1295: πᾶσά τ' ἐξεβακχεύθη πόλις. 1368-9: χαῖρ', ὦ μέλαθρον, χαῖρ', ὦ πατρία / πόλις·. Is this simply metonymy? Human identity is by its nature designated synechdochically, through reference to necessary elements for its being present or viable. It is not easily located, never apprehended as a whole. It is so terminally elusive that we constrained to designate it by referring to aspects of it. Personhood is a referent "not easily located".

[34] 76-8: καὶ θιασεύεται ψυ- / χὰν ἐν ὄρεσσι βακχεύ- / ων ὁσίοις καθαρμοῖσιν.

[35] 1167: δέχεσθ' ἐς κῶμον εὐίου θεοῦ.

[36] Those telling lines at 206-9: οὐ γὰρ διήιρηχ' ὁ θεὸς οὔτε τὸν νέον/ εἰ χρὴ χορεύειν οὔτε τὸν γεραίτερον, / ἀλλ' ἐξ ἁπάντων βούλεται τιμὰς ἔχειν/ κοινάς, διαριθμῶν δ' οὐδέν' αὔξεσθαι θέλει [on 209: διαριθμῶν, see Verdenius, 1962: 342 contra Dodds, "The point is not that Dionysiac worship was essentially collective' (Dodds), but that the god wants to be worshipped by anybody, whatever his status. In other words ἁπάντων does not have a quantitative but a qualitative meaning." He wants to unite mortals under one mortal identity; if they do not wish this, he unites them in one common catastrophe, 1303: τοιγὰρ συνῆψε πάντας ἐς μίαν βλάβην. Cf. Adkins on Plato, Gorgias and Aristotle on *hekousios blabē*, see Adkins, 1960: 373 ff.

In cognitive science, scholars speak of "Theory of Mind"[37]. This refers to the reflex human ascription to others of intentionality[38]. We are all natural theorists, wrote Dennett, (similarly did the great sociologist, Anthony Giddens, famously write that we – competent social actors – are all "dazzling interpreters . . . expert sociologists"); we all theorize and interpret constantly, even when we are sure we are only registering or perceiving[39]. The foundational theorizing, on which we (cognitively competent actors that is) operate is this 'theory of mind', the attribution to others of a mind and intentionality like our own. On it stands also the theory of agency being offered here, for mind and its objects of consciousness are necessary conditions of agency, as that is being articulated. Persons are tragic *because* they have minds, which means language and the potential to take or have taken counsel with themselves, *bouleusis*. Being tragical is necessarily predicated the awareness of a tragic identity. Thought itself, deliberative and articulative, is a language act, a form of internal communication, an internal process of interpretation, judgement and counsel-taking. Because of the nature of language, thought can remain internal or private or it can be externalized, public.

4.2.2 External and Internal Conceptions of Theory of Mind

There are two conceptions of the theory of mind-attribution: internal and external. They are really two perspectives on the origin and nature of mind and its attribution. This is how the anthropologist, Alfred Gell, explained the theory of mind and its internal conception, which is fundamental for this theory of agency in a Greek Tragedy[40]:

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[37] Theory of Mind (ToM): For Dennett's formulation of the "Intentional Stance" (on which see Dennett, 1971, 1987, 1991), "…what I call the *intentional stance* … we must treat [the human subject of a scientific experiment, as we habitually do our social fellows, marked also by their use of language in 'reporting' themselves] as an agent, indeed a rational agent, who harbors beliefs and desires and other mental states that exhibit *intentionality* or 'aboutness,' and whose actions can be explained (or predicted) on the basis of the content of these states.", Dennett, 1991: 76. For one critique of Dennett (amongst others) see Slors, "Why Dennett cannot Explain what it is to Adopt the Intentional Stance", 1996.

[38] Gell, 1998: 127: "It seems that ordinary human beings are 'natural dualists', inclined, more or less from day one, to believe in some kind of 'ghost in the machine' and to attribute the behaviour of social others to the *mental representations these others have 'in their heads'*. Behaviour is caused by factors which well up from within a person, thoughts, wishes, intentions, etc." On theory of mind in the study of religion see Boyer in Boyer [ed.] 1993, 1994, 2001. In the application of cognitive science of religion to Greek religion, see Larsson, 2016. In a discussion of Cognitive dimensions in Greek Tragedy see Easterling & Budelmann, 2010; also Chaston, 2009 on cognitive theory and a reading of Tragedy, with a chapter on *Bacchae* and its handling of masks.

[39] Dennett, 1991: 3-20.

[40] Gell, 1998: 127, my italics. He writes further on the congenital internal conception of mind that humans seem to possess: "It seems that ordinary human beings are 'natural dualists', inclined, more or less from day one, to believe in some kind of 'ghost in the machine' and to attribute the behaviour of social others to the *mental representations these others have 'in their heads'*. Behaviour is caused by factors which well up from within a person, thoughts, wishes, intentions, etc."

> The 'internalist' theory of mind, according to the cognitive psychologists, is a 'module' – a kind of theory (or principle of interpretation) *with which we are born*, along with the principle that *there is a basic distinction between living and non-living things*.

So we have an *innate* predisposition to construe others as mindful others, agents having intentions, according to this conception. This is an account that leaves too much unexplained for some. Supposing others are simply born with minds such as we "know" ourselves to possess requires a certain amount of faith. It is a scientifically insufficient response to that philosophical problem of zombies: how we can know whether our social fellows do in fact have "minds like ourselves" or are not just very good approximators of persons with minds. Perhaps others are, in fact, like those frightening sociopaths who lack any feeling of the subjectivity of others (this is a big problem in Greek poetry, that humans can behave like sociopaths, as it is in historical life), really mindless zombies, automatons or like those computers apparently already on the historical horizon, only very complex and persuasively human-seeming programmes of artificial intelligence[41].

Another conception of mind attribution circumvents the problem of inwardness and the inaccessibility of mind and any need to go on faith that others have mind. This is the external conception and it is also apposite here with the "most manifest" god, *theos epiphanestatos*[42], most public, most plain to see, who "delights in festivals"[43]. Gell borrows Wittgenstein's formulation 'Forms of Life' to describe what 'mind' is under the externalist conception. The echoes of what above Giddens was seen to refer to as the 'competence of social actors' inhering and being manifest in their continuous, *reflexive monitoring*, will be noted:

> According to Wittgenstein, and a great many other subsequent philosophers, the possession of a mind is something we attribute to others *provisionally*, on the basis of the intuition that their behaviours (i.e. their linguistic behaviour) follows *some 'rule'* which, in principle, we may reconstruct . . . If I can get along with the other in the give-and-take of interaction, if our practical efforts to deal with one another work out, then the other is a producer of intelligible (meaningful) behaviour, and hence has a mind, intentions, volitions, etc. I cannot really tell, from the outside, whether

[41] Zombie problem: Dennett, 1991: 72-98. Tomasello's theory of joint attention (Tomasello, 1999) amongst its advantages, would explain the innateness of theory of mind; see also on "Joint-Attention", Tomasello, 2014a.

[42] *Theos epiphanestatos*: In an inscription from the 3rd Century CE Dionysus Eubouleus (of good counsel) is described this way, see Jacottet, 2003: II. 267-8, No. 161. See Henrichs in Schlesier: 105-16.

[43] Delights in festivals, 417-8: ὁ δαίμων ὁ Διὸς παῖς/ χαίρει μὲν θαλίαισιν. On the public nature of Dionysus a god of civic festivals, see Pickard-Cambridge, 1969; Deubner, 1969; Parker, 1996; and Gasper, 2009: *Der Kult des Dionysos im öffentlichen Leben Athens*.

> the 'other' is a zombie or an automaton, who/which mimics the behaviour of an ordinary human being but does not have any of the 'inner experiences' we habitually associate with this behaviour. But this does not matter because the whole panoply of 'mind' is not a series of inner, private experiences at all, but is *out there in the public domain*, as language, practices, routines, rules of the game, etc.; that is, 'forms of life'. Call this the 'externalist' theory of agency-attribution.[44]

The whole panoply of mind is indeed – with *der kommende, epiphanestatos, deinotatos, ēpiōtatos Gott* – in the public domain. In *Bacchae* Euripides presents a vision in which this public domain – the relations between persons and even persons as relationships between parts or aspects of their internal selves, selves which they "see" and examine and address, objects of intention, projected outwards[45] – is what counts. Dionysus is the institutor god and his "institutings", *katastaseis*, have either a public, common face or a secret, mysterious and veiled face. All that is required for access to either kind of them in *Bacchae* is the desire, the right bearing, the relationship that Dionysus wants when he wants to be recognized.

The forms of life which are common between subjects and conveyed through time by generations of predecessors, co-presents and passed on to (receptive) successors are identified by Gell with Bourdieu's notion of the *habitus*: "the sedimented residue of past social interaction which structures ongoing interaction – is not a transcription of common-sense mentalism or 'folk psychology', but is precisely a notion of mind externalized in routine, practices, that is, the prevailing 'form of life'."[46] Bourdieu was a scholar in the tradition of the materialist historiography of his times[47], who nevertheless wanted reasonably to incorporate into his analysis of culture the clearly mental or intellectual dimension that is everywhere with humans. Cornelius Castoriadis' notion of the *Imaginaire* is in this regard an even more powerful conceptual tool, as is the work of Anthony Giddens, who also takes the notion of structure and the nature of institutions to a subtle level of differentiation[48]. The essential point in all three is so too with Dionysus: the relationship between the outside of

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[44] Gell, 1998: 126.

[45] I am suggesting here that persons are not merely beings with language but that language constitutes personhood, and since language entails a relation, the generation of signs and their interpretation, person is in fact always a multiple kind of thing, a thing of parts, something that comes about inside an entity in whom there is already difference, a vessel of voices in which there is always 'gathered together two more' in a single name.

[46] Gell, 1998: 127.

[47] His magnum opus, in which he offers the notion of *habitus*; *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique* was published in 1972, see esp. 256-84.

[48] Castoriadis, 1975: 171-326. It is interesting to read this theorist on social change and the limitations of a positivist, materialist method in understanding history alongside the archaeological works the following decades, which come, from the perspective of a very material kind of science, to very similar conclusions. See for example, Cauvin, 1994 and Hodder, 2006, 2010, 2014. In Giddens, 1979: 9-48. For a discussion of the limitations of Lévi-Straussian structuralist methods in approaches to Greek culture, from the point of view of a scholar who can seem to tend towards a sophisticated biological functionalism himself, see Burkert, 1979: esp. 1-34.

culture and the inside of mind, the relationship – a not entirely passive one at all, but quite recursive – between individuals and their inherited and perpetually re-constituted social worlds.

4.2.3 *Exōthen*: mind always "external"

Dionysus is the god of intersubjectivity. He is the god of both the transformed, heightened mind (prophecy, poetic afflatus, the power of the ecstatic ritual community[49]) and of that punishment, which is the effacement of mind through *mania*. These are his two sides – the capacity for the highest forms of relation and for the destruction of any form at all of relation with others and with self. The self, subjectivity, person, *psychē*, agency – whatever we call it – it is a virtual property and "seen" in special ways, traced by special forms of inference. It is not self-evident but is mediated, symbolically. Like "property", in the sense of 'owned things' – land, goods, money – the property of identity is not an objective "thing", but a relationship, the awareness of that relationship, its articulation and acknowledgement by others.

At Thebes, it is unclear whether Dionysus is a divine person having agency or a "made-up person". Perhaps the unspeakable – *arrhēton* – point is that the distinction does not matter[50]. The Kadmeians have thought that 'Dionysus' is not a divine person, but a pretext for human impulses. Is there an immortal, divine mind behind the mask or only animal appetites and cunning schemes to dissemble these? The problem in *Bacchae* is detecting and recognizing the *quality of mind*, the intentional identity of the one standing opposite one. It is deeply connected to the problem of mind *per se*: not only is it difficult to determine the quality of mind or intention but even first the presence or absence of that strange, immaterial property. Presence and absence are as if plaited together in mind. Mind becomes apparent and unapparent, by turns. It is not easy of detection and is ambiguous. It invests human doings and relations with its own ambiguity.

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[49] See on Plato's differentiation of types of *mania* Pl. *Phdr*. 265a 5-b5, see § 2.6 p. 123 n. 320. On the relationship of strength, *menos*, to *mania* see Burkert *GR* "Der Weinrausch als Bewusstseinsveränderung wird als Einbruch eines Göttlichen gedeutet. Doch geht die dionysische Erfahrung über das Alkoholische weit hinaus und kann davon ganz unabhängig sein; 'Wahnsinn' wird zum Selbstzweck. *Manía*, das griechische Wort dafür, bezeichnet seiner Herkunft nach, in der Verwandtschaft mit *ménos*, das 'Rasen' nicht als Abirren des Wahns, sondern als Steigerung der selbsterlebten 'geistigen Kraft'." These lines opening Burkert's chapter on Dionysus, have struck me as raising something essential about Dionysus, viz. that something inherent in this god invites alternative interpretations and through the antithetical nature of the alternatives raises and articulates interpretation itself as a problem or phenomenon of great import, interpretation, pretext, depth and apparence *qua* problem.

[50] Dionysiac doings are said by Dionysus in his first interview with Pentheus to be "ineffable" or not permitted to speak, 472: ἄρρητ' ἀβακχεύτοισιν εἰδέναι βροτῶν. This contrasts suggestively with the searching for permission to speak elsewhere *parrhēsia* 668 and of course with the desire of Pentheus to know and find out, to permit himself.

It may be uncertain whether the effigy of the god carried in his processions at the Athesteria and Dionysia – the double mask hung on a shaft, the mask suspended from a tree, the statue in the theatre, the god drawn on a wagon, even the thyrsus[51] – are only *representations* or whether they are *presences*. Is the god, clearly not being a human person, so smilingly serene because he does not have the power to move, or because he is a god and *chooses* not to, does not have the desire, to move[52]. Is he mere object or higher kind of subject? By the externalist theory of mind, the conception which seems to come naturally to humans, it does not matter. Dionysus *is* interacted with. Humans in his vicinity *do* have a relationship with "him", just as their ancestors have had.

In exactly the same way, it does not matter if the persons onstage are not "persons we can follow home", as Gould put it, in the sense of *historical* entities with minds, bodies and unique, non-fungible perspectives and experiences and a life that goes on outside of the determined limits of the dramatic performance. We relate to them all the same *as if* they were. Persons historical – underdetermined and always coming into being – and poetic – variably determined but not subject to time and strictly circumscribed by the determining boundaries of their poetic worlds: we relate to all persons in this cognitive way – through memory and anticipation. Human and embodied co-presents and all those whose bodies are not here: the dead, the absent, the fictional, the divine – these all engage us and become engaged by us *as* persons. The lived criterion for personhood is not a general faith articulated and reasoned out or not. Humans very unproblematically interact with others *as*

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[51] Thyrsos as person: in the second stasimon we hear the bacchants summon a Dionysus carrying a thyrsus with a "golden face", 553-54: μόλε, χρυσῶπα τινάσσων, / ἄνα, θύρσον κατ' Ὀλύμπου. The *thyrsos* a torso with a head and hair is effigy-like and like a person always moving: ἀνὰ θύρσον τε τινάσσων, 80; ὡς οὐ κάμοιμ' ἂν οὔτε νύκτ' οὔθ' ἡμέραν/ θύρσωι κροτῶν γῆν, 187-8; παύσω κτυποῦντα θύρσον ἀνασείοντά τε/κόμας, 240-1. It is, like the human head, is the garlanded instrument, (*kissinos belos*, 25, *kissinos baktros* 363) like the thunderbolt, *keraunobolos*, that Zeus carries, 598-600, which is taking on the properties of not merely an object, but of an agent. Its agency is super-natural, it is like the head of mortals which devises schemes and labours to make nature productive to its needs, causes 704-7: θύρσον δέ τις λαβοῦσ' ἔπαισεν ἐς πέτραν, / ὅθεν δροσώδης ὕδατος ἐκπηδᾶι νοτίς·/ ἄλλη δὲ νάρθηκ' ἐς πέδον καθῆκε γῆς/ καὶ τῆιδε κρήνην ἐξανῆκ' οἴνου θεός·. In Asia Minor, where the *thyrsos* and other aspects of their Dionysiac religion were thought to originate, there is a precedent for an instrument of human techniques being construed as a kind of descendant of the sign of heavenly agency, so explains Burkert at *GR:* 67: "In kleinasiatischer Tradition, die in Karien und Lykien später noch zu fassen ist, gilt die Doppelaxt in der Hand eines männlichen, oft Zeus bennanten Gottes offenbar als Blitzwaffe des Wettergottes." Agency is distributed through objects; in *Bacchae* Dionysus' agency is re-distributed through his ritual objects to human persons.
and has power.

[52] Dionysus' effigies: on idols of Dionysus see § 6.3 below. Motion and stillness (fluttering anxiety or still self-possession) are meaningful in perhaps the most kinetic of all Greek Tragedies, with its calm, *hēsuchos*, god at the centre. See Gell on the motion and immobility of idols and their significance, Gell, 1998: 124-26. He refers to the fascinating case of the 'chosen, intentional' immobility of the statue of Shiva explained by Pillai Lokacarya, cited by Eck. Gell, 1998: 126, " . . . there are no 'material tests' for the possession, or non-possession, of agency, there is nothing to prevent us from asserting, if we wish to, that the behaviour of a statue (standing still) occurs because the statue has a mind, intends to stand still, and does as a consequence of this prior intention stand still."

if they have minds, needing only minimal conditions in place. A theatrical or fictional "as if" seems to be a most important element in the identification of persons.

What is most persuasive is if others talk and move (or even only *could* talk and *could* move). The characters of poetry are much more real in the way they are experienced than historical persons: they are more rhetorically developed, more complete – *teleston* – fictions[53]. In a sense, person is always discerned through something like a performance, always detected through the traces of intention; one seldom sees more than a certain aspect or face of persons. Above all this is so because the personhood of our fellow mortal, her mind, is made of the same stuff (only much less accessible to us) as the creations of poets – language. A person is a being or thing that one has a social relationship with. Relations between people, notwithstanding the intermittent erotic entanglements of some bodies, are mental and linguistic. They are not only 'mediated' by symbols and language. They are constituted by and of these.

We might say that, in life as it is lived, while appearing to potentially have a mind is the precondition for standing in a personal relation, the logical order is almost reversed. Humans – such habitually personalizing construers of agency, so "ultra-social"[54] – unproblematically form relations with projected persons and simultaneously, or consequently, discern mind. Humans may be natural theorizers, but they are not cognitive scientists. What is primary with them is not the abstract issue of the presence or innateness of mind as necessary condition, but the formation of all kinds of social bonds with others, and these are *imaginé*. As Gell wrote, "The externalist theory is not really about the 'psyche' or 'consciousness'; it is an account of intersubjectivity rather than subjectivity . . ."[55].

The intersubjectivity, which is everywhere evident with humans, testifies to their social and therefore cognitive competence. Humans are naturals when it comes to intersubjectivity. They instinctively rely on an external conception of mind. An individual's social engagement by and with others – human and non-human – minimal as it is, consists in their construing one another as persons having minds. Because they do so their social fellows

[53]This brings to mind a memorable passage from the memoirs of the critic Marcel Reich-Ranicki, touching on many of the issues in *Bacchae*, viz. *theomachein*, absence, presence, credibility and fictionality, Reich-Ranicki, 1999: 56-7: "Einer jüdischen Maxime zufolge kann ein Jude nur mit oder gegen, doch nicht ohne Gott leben . . . Die Rebellion des Goetheschen Prometheus – «Ich dich ehren? Wofür?» – ist mir volkommen fremd . . . Als ich viele Jahren später einem Freund, einem gläubigen Christen, sagte, für mich sei Gott keine Realität, sondern eher eine nicht sonderlich gelungene literarische Figur, vielleicht vergleichbar mit Odysseus oder König Lear, antwortete er durchaus schlagfertig, es könne überhaupt keine stärkere Realität geben als Odysseus oder König Lear." I tend to agree with the friend.

[54] See Tomasello, 2014a, 2014b: "The ultra-social animal". From a philosophical perspective, which complements Tomasello, the scientist's, work in fascinating ways, see Taylor, 2016 *The Language Animal. The full shape of the human linguistic capacity.*

[55] Gell, 1998: 127.

may do so too. This "construal" is not necessarily reasoned or conscious; it is shot through with unconscious inferences and motivations, a pre-conscious reflex or a factor of the "practical" rather than "discursive" consciousness[56]. Hence, this intersubjectivity is shaped by the hidden and the latent and unarticulated at least as much as, and probably more than, by what is expressed or "out there". Such is the state, halfway between knowledge and ignorance – *metaxu sophias kai amathias* – in which human life transpires.

That we are speaking, interpreting, anticipating each other; that I follow the thread of your successive discourse in turn-taking talk; that I take your next move and the motives for earlier acts as intelligible and communicate with you on the premise of your intelligibility; and that we, through all our comic and tragic misunderstandings and clarifications, do communicate and miscommunicate, these provide sufficient proof that the mind we have instinctively 'theorized' in one another, has been *there*. Even our miscommunications represent strong evidence from which we can infer our likeness to one another. In the context of this argument, the effectiveness of communication does not lie primarily in *what* we, successfully or not, communicate, but *that* we do, that we try, that we assume or simply act as if it *is* possible to relate.

The internal conception requires faith and is therefore problematic for scientists. The external conception requires only the appearance of mind, for it to hold valid. Mind is apparent in those objective traces of intentionality – ancient city walls, temples, rites, myths, names, histories, technologies – from which we infer the erstwhile presence of persons having motives. What is striking is that, by both conceptions, the *human subject* generates the world in its mental dimensions. The mindful human construes others and the world on its own mentalist terms. Is Dionysus out there? It may not matter; he was always constituted through relation. It may even be that "out there" is an unhelpful description, in that the mind that we consider our most intimate possession is in fact "out there", something between persons rather than hermetically sealed kernels within individuals. Or it may be that individuals contain a virtual "out there" within, an internal public culture, that they represent an elision that diminishes the apparently absolute division of *exōthen* and *endothen*.

Whether we take it *on faith* that Dionysus is a divine person with an immortal mind, (virtual, a property that in a god takes any physical form it 'wishes') or whether it is so because we *have a relationship* with Dionysus as a god, (which we could only have with a being with a projected mind, and an immortal god he must be if "he" has been interacted with [worshipped] for generations, i.e. is not subject to time as humans are): it may amount to the

[56] Giddens, 1984: 40-5.

same thing. It may not appear to matter for the everyday life of the *polis*, the historical, human social world, *how* it is that we recognize the personhood of others, only *that* we do.

Yet, Dionysus, Euripides' Dionysus in *Bacchae*, is a god who unifies the two conceptions of mind as two modes of inferring person. He wants us to have an innate faith that he is the god Dionysus, that he has the intentional identity of a god. Dionysus comes amongst mortals in their *poleis* that they may "know him". What is it we recognize or know when we know Dionysus? It is not a material form or shape, for he takes any *morphē* he wishes. It is clearly something "behind" form, or within form, something alternatively hidden or revealed by form. He insists on his birth and his name and his relation to Zeus, he insists on his identity and he shows his mutability. He makes patent and manifest what he is, yet what he is is a quality, a relation, that hard-to-locate property which is everywhere: a mind.

Why "mind" and not "presence", one may ask. How do we distinguish between these two properties? Are not "presence" and "mind" not very nearly the same thing? We address the fiction of someone's mind when we address the absent; even when we create a simulacrum of their body, it is the mental identity that is the "target" of our intention. Dionysus takes many forms, even a disembodied voice in the air. What we communicate with and feel communicated to by, is the presence of a mind. A body can be present but not have "presence", which depends always on the discernment of a personal identity being *there*. That identity is immaterial, its necessary condition mental. The presence of a mind is a sufficient condition for our feeling the identity is present.

Dionysus wants us to know him through his rites and festivals, through his moods and atmospheres, through the affective state which is the mark of his presence. We know Dionysus through the relationship he offers with himself (which also entails, as a side-effect of this *divine pharmakon*, a certain quality of relation with others). That he is god and son of Zeus, he wants mortals to know, by any conception of mind there may be available to them. Dionysus, as ever, threads together the internal and the external in the endless unbinding and rebinding, which always belongs to him.

4.2 *Aphanēs Nóos*

ὀργὰς πρέπει θεοὺς οὐχ ὁμοιοῦσθαι βροτοῖς.[57]

> So a theory which only relates actions to (inner, prior) intentions, even if adequate psychologically, is socially inadequate.[58]

Opaque in their intentions are the gods. As the poet and statesman Solon had put it a century before Euripides: πάντηι δ' ἀθανάτων ἀφανὴς νόος ἀνθρώποισιν "in every way opaque, *aphanēs*, to mortals is the mind of gods"[59]. In their passions and tempers, however, the gods in Euripides are only *too like* mortals, only too readily intelligible. In this section we explore the significance of the simultaneous intelligibility and inscrutability or opaqueness – *to aphanes* – of Dionysus, this paradoxical person always in turn a *kruptos* and an *epiphanestatos theos*[60].

The predominant readings of Euripides' *Bacchae* since Dodds' seminal edition and commentary, have been religious-anthropological, ritualist, psychological, structuralist and post-structuralist. Everyone gets the Dionysus he or she deserves, quipped Versnel[61]. Does the drama defer meaning in the endlessness of ambiguity and *mise en abîme*, does it offer a glimpse into the unfathomable, the never explicable, only diagnosable abyss of irrationality? What, quite, are we to make of its opaqueness? It is a complex work, long discussed in the literature as a "problem" or a "riddle". Over the last 70 years, a certain Doddsian consensus has more or less established itself as interpretive orthodoxy, resolving the "enigma" by locating it anthropologically and historically, through a vestigially Freudian *Kulturtheorie* in which Civilization (in all its *Unbehage*) is implicitly construed on the tripartite model of the individual subject (Ego, Super-ego, Id), having its drives and repressions and terminally inarticulable and elusive irrational depths, hidden and becoming intermittently and involuntarily unconcealed in crisis and comedy.

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[57] 1348: "It is not fitting for gods to resemble mortals in their passions."

[58] Gell, 1998: 127.

[59] Solon fr. 17.

[60] *Kruptos*: "covered up", "concealed": see 98, 459, and see Dionyus' remarks to Pentheus at 955-6.

[61] Versnel, 1990: 96 "Every reader gets the *Bacchae* he deserves." see § 1.2 n. 20.

Bacchae has much in common with *Iphigenia at Aulis*. There is a scheme, or deception, with gruesome consequences that triggers the actions of both. Agamemnon bluffs Clytemnestra with the *prophasis*, pretext that he has arranged a marriage for their daughter; Dionysus plays a double-bluff on Pentheus and Thebes. In both dramas a god's desire will spread through the context of human agents and instruments through rebarbative acts and disastrous consequences. There is in both, a thematic interest in the opposition between concealed intentions, their non-decipherment and dramatic revelation – the standard model of tragedy, perhaps, but it bears underlining when both plays can so easily be taken instead as if "Miracle Plays", as if primarily occupied with an enactment of religious myths and aetiologies of their corollary rites[62]. The concealment and revelation of motives is a thematic opposition, represented in Homer by those two types of man, Achilles and Odysseus. Both of these, (even if Odysseus never appears onstage, his presence at Aulis is *effective*), play a very significant part in the *Iphigenia at Aulis*, as they do in other tragic dramas, with very similar roles[63]. In the *Bacchae* the contrast between Achillean *parrhēsia* and Odyssean *krupsis* is sharply drawn.

A god viewed so much in the popular imagining, since at least the late-Romantic Nietzsche, as a figure of nature and unbridled emotion[64], the Dionysus of the *Bacchae* is in fact marked by absolute, indeed god-like self-possession, by equanimity and self-mastery. That those in his proximity have lost or are losing any power of agency over their own wills, only more intensely heightens this fact about him. That this is the consequence of their attitudes and choices makes a theme of human judgement and bearing. Euripides in the *Bacchae*, as in his other works, is exploiting a religious myth for its plot[65], but the content and substance of the tragedy, its focus and main interest, is the complex nature of the human social world, its being of nature and culture; and its ethical *Problematik* (and that includes divine social actors, as seen here in *Bacchae* itself only *a special category of social other*)[66].

This is a context constituted of and by *agentful* human subjects deliberating and scheming, dominating and becoming dominated, habitual talkers sizing up each other, failing to size up themselves and dramatically discovering how near the inassimilable or uncanny – *to*

[62] The event of the performance of Euripides' plays in 405 BCE is not one in which Dionysus, his myth and rituals, is a singular topic. *Bacchae* is a play amongst, or alongside other plays. What it has in common with those plays reveals something important about *Bacchae* on its own. See on this point Hall in Stuttard: 11-28..

[63] Cf. for example, Odysseus in Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, *Ajax* and in Euripides' *Hecuba* where both Odysseus and Achilles as a vengeful wraith, are represented as repugnantly unsympathetic.

[64] Henrichs, 1984, "Loss of Self, Suffering, Violence: The modern view of Dionysus from Nietzsche to Girard" is one of the best discussions of the modern career of Dionysus.

[65] For a scholar like Seaford, however, it is the reverse: the religious myth is not pretext for a play but the play an occasion for a ritual event.

[66] Thumiger, 2007 is an accomplished study of characterization in *Bacchae*. Rather than "character" I am concerned with the Euripidean anthropology of subjectivity, the sociological dimension of which, intersubjectivity, is indissociable.

deinon – stands to them. A quintessential form of agency in the social world of Tragedy and here specifically in the *Bacchae*, is not only to be able to read and evaluate one's own values and desires, but the ability to decipher, to read and interpret social others *and* self – the art of penetrating exteriors, discerning the relationship between form and content. The obverse of this capacity is the power to dissemble, to devise decoys, to disguise. The mastery of outward form is a special skill of the gods[67]. It is a skill which humans – actors – have in a kind of enfeebled version, *so artistisch ist der Mensch*[68]. Dionysus is an outstanding example of this, elsewhere but very eminently so in *Bacchae*[69].

Tragic protagonists are inhabitants of a world marked by the very social perils, the contests and frictions, which everywhere mark historical, common-life. In this world the most powerful and therefore most dangerous phenomenon is the agency of social actors, both human and divine. Forms of agency and their limitations (their character as both compromised and threateningly hidden within subjects, behind their opaque, dissimulable social faces): this is a part of what Euripides explores and dramatizes in *Bacchae*. The Greek tragedian is doubtlessly a dazzling interpreter, an expert sociologist and also a penetrating anthropologist, for his own work represents an anthropology of the *polis*, which invites from us a commensurately social-anthropological reading[70].

From swift-footed Achilles, the hater of liars in Homer, to the coursing maenads of Euripides' *Bacchae*, in whom any faculty for dissimulation or calculation has been dissolved; from the disguised wanderer, learning the "cities and minds of men" of the Odyssey[71]; to the shape-shifting god of Euripides' *Bacchae*, who travels from city to city to ultimately unmask

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[67] Divine disguisements: Ovid, who I think was a penetrating reader of Euripides, exploits the divine capacity for change as a comic foil to the pathetic human condition of irreversibility, in his brilliant cosmic panorama *Metamorphoses*.

[68] See § 4.3.7 p. 274 n. 171.

[69] See especially Aristophanes' *Frogs*, where much comedy is juiced from the identity crises that typically transpire where Dionysus is. For Dionysus in Aeschylus' see from his *Lykurgeia* Ffr. 23-4 *Bassarids*, (in which Orpheus suffers Pentheus' fate of being torn to pieces by followers of Dionysus, called not bacchants but "bassarids") and Ffr. 57-62 *Edonians* and the satyr-play *Lykurgus*. Aeschylus also wrote a *Bacchae* and other Dionysus-themed Tragedies, a *Pentheus* and *Xantriai* in which the events take place on Mt. Cithaeron and the death of Pentheus is mentioned – *Lyssa* is not "light" in this work apparently; a *Semelē* or *Hydrophoroi;* and a satyr-play *Trophoi* "Nurses of Dionysus". On these see also Jouan, 1992 and West, 1990 and on *Bassarids,* Seaford, 2005. For the background in the history of drama to *Bacchae* see Dodds xxviii-xxxiii and Sommerstein in Stuttard, 29-41.

[70] "Dazzling interpreters": "Even the crudest forms of reified thought, however, leave untouched *the fundamental significance of the knowledgeability of human actors.* For knowledgeability is founded less upon discursive than practical consciousness. The knowledge of social conventions, of oneself and of other human beings, presumed in being able to 'go on' in the diversity of contexts of social life is detailed and dazzling. All competent members of society are vastly skilled in the practical accomplishments of social activities and are expert 'sociologists'." Giddens, 1984: 26. This is a very important idea in Giddens and one with very great import for the interpretation of Tragedy. Tragic protagonists are *knowledgeable*, in the way that normal (competent) "lay persons" always are. See also his "reiteration of basic concepts", Giddens, 1984: 281-4.

[71] Hom. *Od.* 1.3: πολλῶν δ' ἀνθρώπων ἴδεν ἄστεα καὶ νόον ἔγνω.

himself with great drama[72] – the detection and concealment of identity and motive constitute a recurrent theme in early Greek Poetry. *Bacchae* is a work studied in the 20th Century sometimes for its supposedly ritual – *telestic* – content and patterning[73], interpreted from points of view for which agency and subjectivity have had very little place. Nevertheless, the theme of detection of and failure in detection of agency, so expressive of general concern with the human person and its identity as "agentful" subject, is most prominent in the play.

It is a dramatic vision deeply interested in humans as distinguished for their mental powers, limitations and errors and their reflexive attribution of these faculties to their qualitatively identical social others, mortal and immortal. Such a claim and approach may be at odds with the orthodoxy of the previous century, which had dispensed with the Tylorian "intellectualism" of its preceding century in favour of the study of humans as the objects of amoral, libidinal and irrational forces – historical and psychological – which are never completely manifest to themselves. Humans by such a view are not so much agentful subjects, as the passive *objects* of study such as we find so impressively articulated in the *scientistic* visions of Freud and Lévi-Strauss. Still, implicit in the poets' thematization of *krupsis* and *apokalypsis* is a cognitive sociology of protagonists, which sheds helpful light on the values, preoccupations and anthropological *Weltanschauung* of the Attic poet.

In *Bacchae* we may discern the expression of a poetic social-anthropology. Here is *mania*, the loss of self-control (the Dionysiac dissolution of personal agency, of the capacity for self-regard); *tuchē*, contingency, (the arbitrary force of circumstance); and the healthy bearing towards existence (*sōphrosunē*); the circumventions (*technē*), that its circumstances summon up from persons. Ubiquitous is the mind – *phrenes*, *nóos*, *prapis*, *kardia*, *psuchē* – in various states of well-being, which is determining for the predicament of the "owner" of that mind. The action and its circumstances serve at least as much to illuminate the nature of human agency, its social and cognitive character, as to represent Dionysiac religious experience (if, in any case, that could meaningfully be separated in the Theatre of Dionysus from the question of existence, its meaning and value *per se*). The experience of Dionysus must, in any case, be regarded as a certain permutation of cognitive and social states in which human agency becomes both (or either) dissipated and (or) uncannily empowered. One of the things that might be said of what Euripides set out to do in *Bacchae*, is that it was to illuminate and interpret the nature of control – political, social, volitional, cognitive: *kratos*, *kuria*, *dunamis* – of agency and mind in the spectre of its disintegration; the consequences of its absence; and in the comparatively morally vacuous form it takes in a god.

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[72] Much like the Odysseus of Hom. *Odyssey* 22.

[73] Murray, 1913, an important voice amongst the 'Cambridge Ritualists' (on whom see Ackerman, 2002); Seaford, 1981, 1994, 1996; Foley's notion (1985) of 'ritual irony' is perhaps the most sophisticated permutation of a 'ritual' approach.

4.2.1 *Polis*: an endless crisis of solidarity

> νοῦς δέ γ' οὐ βέβαιος ἄδικον κτῆμα κοὐ σαφὲς φίλοις.
>
> An unsure mind [*nóos*] is an injurious property and opaque to one's own [*philois*: family, friends]. [74]

The composite picture of 5th C. life that Greek history, biography, lyric poetry, drama, forensic oratory, inscriptions, legal records and even philosophical dialogue paint, is of an enviably vibrant social world. Life at Athens is marked by tension, contestation and all the threats to unity, prosperity and the survival of the community in its given shape, that emanate from the human tendency to be both or either collaborative and competitive; curious and violently appetent; imaginatively sympathetic of stupidly selfish, *mōros*[75]. Greek history can, from one perspective, be seen as the insoluble difficulty the different Greek cities had in getting on, in not fighting each other, not to mention working together bound through a sustained pan-Hellenic identity. Aristophanes' celebration of the veterans of the Persian Wars – *marathōnomachai* – is so poignant because the unity that had once saved Greece, is no more by the end of the century, in the midst of the war with Sparta, when he was composing many of his great works[76]. *Iliad* is a story about war and betrayal, where politics is personal. The Greek leaders cannot get on, husbands and wives deceive one another, men scheme and plan and gods are not much different at all. In the Greek imagination, the social world of persons – divine and human – is one in which these are beset on all sides by the potentially dangerous motives, desires and stratagems of others. It is a perpetual *agōn*, a scene of contest for honours, of jealousy and rivalry as well as friendship, love and reflection. This is a contest demanding vigilance, which is temporarily and rhythmically relieved – in *symposion*, *kōmas*, festival, sleep and the deliverance of imagination and exhilaration – by the god of healthy, joyful sociability: Dionysus.

Anthropological constants are themselves contested claims. I am going to lay myself open to disagreement here and contend that the desire to live amongst other persons and, simultaneously, the difficulty that humans have in getting on with one another, in conjoining their purposes in a sustained way: this is an anthropological constant. People are social. People are hard to get on with. They always have been and, doubtless, always will be.

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[74] Menelaus to his brother Agamemnon at Eur. *IA* 334.

[75] As Teiresias warns pentheus, 369: μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει.

[76] *Marathōnomachai*: Ar. *Ach.* 181, *Nu.* 986.

They are frustratingly attractive to one another. They frustrate one another's desires. Literature is very much about this, uses it as its material. Modern history, cinema, novels: one does not need to look far before one comes upon examples supporting this thesis. Perhaps an instance from the history of Christian religiosity, so redolent of Dionysiac religiosity, will suffice for illustration of what I mean. In his *The Making of Late Antiquity*, Peter Brown memorably described an instance of the recognition of what I am calling the troubled sociality of humans. In the context of his discussion of St. Anthony, St. Pachomus and the origins of monasticism he wrote of "a crisis of solidarity", a "tension as old as the village itself", which are terms well apposite to Thebes and the other cities of the Greek Tragic vision:

> The villages seem to have been passing through a crisis of solidarity more acute than the usual unresolved tensions of peasant life . . . The villages from which the ascetics came were not inhabited by the docile and overtaxed *fellahin* of modern imagination, but by *singularly abrasive small farmers*[77], for whom violence of body and tongue alike were normal: "'He who dwells with brethren' said Abba Matoes 'must not be square, but round, so as to turn himself toward all.' He went on: 'It is not through virtue that I live in solitude, but through weakness; those who live in the midst of men are the strong ones."[78]

"Becoming round" means taking on a social and ethical bearing, a posture apposite for the day-to-day *durée* of social life, which requires a strength and attention, a resilience with which mortals are clearly not born[79]. Mortals are born more like Cyclopes, appetent, easily deceived, solipsistic and not yet having developed the "strengths" that would equip them for complex group life. Individual human persons are like cities: over-populated with a citizenry of desires. Human cities constituted of such "overpopulated subjects" are therefore, *a fortiori*, always themselves 'over-populated' places.

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[77] The *singularly abrasive small farmer* may well be a good candidate for the basic social and economic identity of the "man in the street" of history in the *longe durée*.

[78] On the desert ascetics of Late Antique Egypt, Brown talks also about the 'friction points', tensions and strains of life in Egyptian villages, where "Neighbourliness was always under strain". It is away from the difficult context of human common life ("the space-time of the *polis*", "the flow of day-to-day interactions", "the *durée* of history", as Giddens might put it) that the monk turns to the promise of a wholesome sociality in god. Human beings struggle to get on and this fact, though it does not wholly explain religion, is integral to understanding religion, the content of which very often has to do with the nurturing of some kind of alternative way of relating between persons (historical and projected). Religious rites have the power or simply the effect to transform identities and therefore relations. See Brown, 1978: 83, he is quoting from Matoes *Apothegm.* 13, 293C.

[79] Rather as in the Platonic fantasy in *Symposium* by which humans once were integers, afterwards split accounting for both the attractiveness of others and the sense of the incompleteness of the lover that can only be satisfied through re-union, but also we may imagine, the difficulty of getting on with such unfinished beings. See Pl. *Sym.* 190c – 193b.

Cities and persons require constant counsel-taking, *bouleusis*. Individuals have desires and reflect upon them, devise means of realizing, suppressing or concealing them. Institutions are like common minds for deliberating upon and articulating the conjoined intentions of the community. Tensions between individual persons can threaten the conjoining of purposes and the institutions, which express those yoked-together purposes or *telē*. The challenge for citizens and their common identity, the *polis*, is to manage tensions and at best to martial the energies of individuals and competition productively. Institutions, themselves identities conceived to resolve tensions, need to be continuously groomed, just as relations between individuals are constantly subjected to grooming, checking, pruning and cutting back of the very psychological energy and libidinal vitality, never definitively suppressed, always coming into being, which creates those tensions. Individuals are habitually self-serving; they are not consistently, desirably servants of the common purpose. Their selfishness is a constant threat to the common, intersubjective order. In a democracy, or at any rate in a fairly sophisticated form of social-political life, it is not by force, *bia*, that individuals will get their way. They will use persuasion, *peithō*, and any form of guile, *dolos*, to turn the minds of others to their own ends.

4.2.2 *Dolos*

> ἔνθ' οὔ τίς ποτε μῆτιν ὁμοιωθήμεναι ἄντην
> ἤθελ', ἐπεὶ μάλα πολλὸν ἐνίκα δῖος Ὀδυσσεὺς
> παντοίοισι δόλοισι, πατὴρ τεός, εἰ ἐτεόν γε
> κείνου ἔκγονός ἐσσι· σέβας μ' ἔχει εἰσορόωντα.
>
> Then there was no man who wanted to be set up as equal (*homoiōthēmenai*)
> for cunning (*mētis*) opposite godly Odysseus; he far surpassed them
> in every kind of stratagem *(doloisi*); your father if truly (*eteon*)
> you are his son; and wonder (*sebas*) seizes me when I look on you (*eisorōnta*).[80]

In Tragedy this crisis of solidarity – as old as the village itself – is expressed, for example, through a typical way of turning towards others and seeming *round*. This is the circumvention of others' wills – a 'getting round' of fellows – which is deception, *dolos*. Pentheus is caught in a *bolos*, the hunting net of Dionysus' devising. [81] The network of façades, yards and chambers of his own palace, (which Dionysus will make to reel, 585-603)

[80] Hom. *Od.* 3. 120-3. Trans. Lattimore, 1967 with some modifications.

[81] 848-9: γυναῖκες, ἀνὴρ ἐς βόλον καθίσταται,/ ἥξει δὲ βάκχας, οὗ θανὼν δώσει δίκην. This must be read with all its irony against the earlier (and later) threats and plans of Pentheus, to hunt out the bacchants: 226-32, 352-7, 497.

is the trammel – *bolos* – in which transformed, *he* becomes the prey ensnared. So too was his cousin Actaeon once metamorphosed, as too his grandparents Kadmos and Harmonia shall be and as his mother and aunts – though these last lose their minds and not their bodies, while the others their bodies but not entirely their minds[82]. The young king is lured inside his own royal house to be made over, tricked out in the disguise of a female bacchant, a ridiculous victim of divine *dolos*, "treachery, craft". Having earlier remarked that where women are involved things will be "cracked and devious"[83], Pentheus himself is now lured inside to be transformed, by Dionysus' craft, into a "crafty surveyor", a treacherous spy – *dolion kataskopon*. So does Dionysus describe him, laying on with very great emphasis, the point about Pentheus' concealment, *krupsis*, 953-6:

> Pe. καλῶς ἔλεξας· οὐ σθένει νικητέον
> γυναῖκας· <ὑπ'> ἐλάταις δ' ἐμὸν κρύψω δέμας.
> Di. κρύψηι σὺ κρύψιν ἥν σε κρυφθῆναι χρεών,
> ἐλθόντα δόλιον μαινάδων κατάσκοπον.
>
> Pe. Finely have you put it, it is not by strength that women
> Are to be overcome, <under> the fir-trees I shall conceal my frame [*demas*: body].
> Di. You'll be concealed in the concealment, in which you must be concealed,
> when you come as a crafty (*dolion*) surveyor on the maenads.

Euripides makes of his projected Thebes, Aulis and Corinth and their social actors, ad hoc, collapsible models of impermanent human existence. Metamorphosis is an important feature in these models. Actaeon, Pentheus, Kadmos, his daughters, Harmonia, the female citizenry of Thebes; Semelē, Hera, Zeus and Dionysus at Thebes: the city is the scene of continual disguisements and transformations. The Labdacids will have the opposite problem: Laius, Oedipus, Eteocles, Polyneices, Antigone – these do not conceal their intentions, they are not transformed, they are only too much what they are. Metamorphosis and reversal have this prominent place because the Greek poet dwells on the real problems of individual and common social existence: securing continuity, the relationship of identity to form, the mending of ruptures and bonds, transience, survival, death.

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[82] Actaeon: 337-40, 1291, cf. Ovid *Met.* 3. 228-52. Kadmos and Harmonia: 1330-9. Agauē and her sisters: 31-8, 677-768, Agauē regains her temporarily lost mind at 1259-1301.

[83] 486-7: Di. νύκτωρ τὰ πολλά· σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος./ Pe. τοῦτ' ἐς γυναῖκας δόλιόν ἐστι καὶ σαθρόν.

Dolos has the basic sense of 'bait, lure' for its original meaning[84]. In its more abstract or extended sense, however, *dolos* and its composites will be familiar to readers of Homer. It is a term and a phenomenon, "craftiness", that appears often in the Homeric world, most typically in respect of four things – human relations (especially connubial); scheming god; devices (*mēchanai*); and the man of consummate and multiform craft, the great improviser, Odysseus. *Dolos*, since basically denoting "dangerous gift-giving, lures, bait, catching and trapping", connotes imperilled relations, fabricated bonds, hidden intention.

Inherent in *dolos* is the image of the ligatures between actors that will turn out in fact to be negative entanglements: nets and lassoes, *brochoi*[85]. *Dolos* is manipulation of the will of others through dissemblance of motive: concealment, *kryptein*; surprise, *ta nea*; sabotage, *ellochizein*; ambush, *lochos*[86]. It will not be surprising if etymologically it turns out to be related quite simply to *talk*[87]. Talk is itself inherently dangerous, because human relations are always imperilled, clarity is hard to secure, ambiguity ineradicable. The light which human minds manage to throw on things is the light of a dancing flame, it throws dancing shadows and glancing illuminations. People, even when they think they are most wary and not ingenuous, will be taken in by the wily. A social and psychological fact, this represents an immoveable political problem. Hence, for example, could the great statesman-poet, Solon, write of his fellow Athenians:

> ὑμ<έω>ν δ' εἷς μὲν ἕκαστος ἀλώπεκος ἴχνεσι βαίνει,
> σύμπασιν δ' ὑμῖν χαῦνος ἔνεστι νόος·
> ἐς γὰρ γλῶσσαν ὁρᾶτε καὶ εἰς ἔπη αἱμύλου ἀνδρός,
> εἰς ἔργον δ' οὐδὲν γιγνόμενον βλέπετε.

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[84] Chantraine "<<tromperie, ruse>>… parfois avec un sens concret chez Hom.: le cheval de Troie, le filet où Héphaistos attrape Arès, l'appât pour un poisson (Od. 12, 252), ce qui peut être le sens originel". See in a discussion of narrative technique in Tragedy, Goward on "Narrative deceit: *dolos*" in Tragedy, Goward, 1999: 39-52, (focussed on Aeschylus and Sophocles, not Euripides or Dionysus' *dolos*).

[85] *Brochoi*: "slip-knot, snare" 545, 615, 619, 1021, see also § 2.2.1.1 n. 68.

[86] The man of low-cunning, that "city slicker" who instigates a failed attempt to catch the bacchants and collect a reward, gets the shepherds ("dwellers of the holy plateaux") to hide in ambush, 721-3: εὖ δ' ἡμῖν λέγειν/ ἔδοξε, θάμνων δ' ἐλλοχίζομεν φόβαις/ κρύψαντες αὐτούς. An ambuscade is a concealing of bodies in a "thicket" *lochmē*: κἀγὼ 'ξεπήδησ' ὡς συναρπάσαι θέλων,/ λόχμην κενώσας ἔνθ' ἐκρύπτομεν δέμας. Later Pentheus deluded thinks he will hunt down the bacchants in their "thickets/ lairs", but it is they who will ambush him, his camouflage too will serve the very opposite *telos* from the one he had anticipated. When Dionysus summons the made-over Pentheus out of the palace it is as a "spy on your mother and her *lochos*" "ambush, band" [and even, I think not insignificantly in a play in which we have heard so much about parturition and all things obstetric, *lochia* "child-birth" (89, 94)] *914*-16: ὄφθητί μοι,/ σκευὴν γυναικὸς μαινάδος βάκχης ἔχων,/ μητρός τε τῆς σῆς καὶ λόχου κατάσκοπος·.

[87] Chantraine suggests that *dolos* may be historically connected with "talk", *dolos s.v.*: ". . . l'étymologie de δόλος reste douteuse: on a évoqué v. *isl. tal* 'compte, discours' et *tāl* 'ruse, tromperie" etc. angl.-s. tæl f. "blâme", etc., german. commun **tēlo-* ; ou sans plus de raison lat. *dolāre* et δαιδαάλλω; si le sens originel était "appât". etc., on pourrait penser à δέλεαρ [bait]". In addition to "talk", consider also "tell" and Dutch 'Taal'. *Dólos*, whatever the historical etymology, in Tragedy and in *Bacchae* is "talk". Through talk actors take in one another, exploit one another's desires, fail to recognize the dangers of their own impulses.

Your trouble is, each of you treads the fox's way,
but your collective wits are thin as air.
You watch a crafty fellow's tongue, and what he
says, [*eis epē*]
but fail to look at anything he does [*eis ergon*].

In the *theatron* of Dionysus (the place for spectating – *theāsthai* – looking at what crafty fellows do), what persons *do* is primarily *talk*: address, respond, take turns, counsel, deliberate, desire, judge and become judged, talk in time with one another, i.e. sing. The *ergon* of drama is *epē*. Persuasion (*peithō*) is regularly opposed to Force (*bia*) by the Athenians, but in fact with the right kind of mind, the enchanting power of *Peithō* can itself become only another, even more forceful form of *Bia*. The life of the democratic city, with its *bouleutēria* (counsel chambers) and *bouleis* (counsels), has at its centre the *agora*, the scene where people with their *orexeis,* appetites and *bouleis*, desires 'gather', *ageirein*, and address each other, *agoreuein*. The *polis*, the human social world, is a scene of talk more than anything else, and talk incurs dangers. Talk is entanglement and the means to solve entanglement. Such is the fix in which humans find themselves.

A fisherman is said to cast a *dolos* into the sea, bait for little fishes[88]. As a device it may be said to reify human will and purpose. Tools are, of course, artefacts that embody human intention, because they are prosthetic extensions of intention. They are means towards ends which one way or another, are always human. In *Odyssey* 4, Menelaus narrates how he had once walked alone on an Egyptian beach, (this is the solitariness of the leader in Ancient poetry, like the isolation of Pentheus who "alone travails for the city"[89]). He, meanwhile, has left his men behind; oppressed by hunger, they are casting fishing lines and hooks – *doloi* – into the sea. He is going to learn how, by another kind of device taught him by Proteus' (treacherous) daughter Eidothea, to wait and catch that Old Man of the Sea[90], who "always speaks the truth"or is "infallible": *nēmertēs*; "straight": *atrekēs*; "a deathless person who knows the depths of the sea"[91]. Persons are catching one another to find out how to become freed.

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[88] Hom. *Od.* 12.252 ἰχθύσι τοῖς ὀλίγοισι δόλον κατὰ εἴδατα βάλλων.

[89] Pentheus' isolation: 963-4 μόνος σὺ πόλεως τῆσδ' ὑπερκάμνεις, μόνος·/τοιγάρ σ' ἀγῶνες ἀναμένουσιν οὓς ἐχρῆν.

[90] Menelaus' story (and his telling it) prepares the audience, nicely in miniature, for the similar pattern of entrapment on an island, help from a magical female, cunning intelligence, disguise (as seals) to outwit the Proteus who is a herder like the Cyclops, a voyage into a (watery) underworld and ultimate escape: see Hom. *Od.* 4.351-592. Exactly the same pattern of smaller actions preceding larger ones is what we have in *Bacchae*, a kind of Russian doll of events. Actaeon's fate prepares us for Pentheus', the *sparagmos* of the bullock narrated by the servant at 677-768, prepares us for the identical fate of Pentheus, who will be mistaken for a bullock (1185-7) narrated by the messenger at 1114-39.

[91] Proteus: Hom. *Od.* 4.384-6: γέρων ἅλιος νημερτής, / ἀθάνατος, Πρωτεὺς Αἰγύπτιος, ὅς τε θαλάσσης/πάσης βένθεα οἶδε.

Strange as it may sound, a fisherman has a kind of social relation, if of the crudest kind, with the fish he catches. It may be mediated by inert objects, tools; the fisherman, who casts out bait for fish, hooks them on his *dolos*, and scoops them up "in his hollow ox-horn . . . and throws them on the dry land gasping and struggling", may not think of the fish as persons, but he has corresponded with them as persons typically do one with another[92]. He has had to engage them, he has had to offer them a kind of gift, to take on the apparent role of fosterer or the unapparent character of chance, (it appears that no one has offered the food, it was just there). He has exploited their desires against their unwitting selves. It is a kind of performance, this angling, in order to snare the fish; all this ultimately to foster his own flesh, on theirs.

Dolos is a gift which is not what it seems; its benefit accrues to the giver and the loss will be the receiver's. In Homer the wooden horse given the Trojans was a *dolos*; erotic gifts are demands, so Aphrodite and Circe are marked by *dolos*; as is the connubial relationship generally, (Clytemnestra's deception of Agamemnon or the account of Hephaestus' discovery of Aphrodite's infidelity with Ares[93]); and those guileful spouses, Penelope and Odysseus. *Dolos* is a rudimentary form of illusionism. It has this in common with theatre: it is illusionist and encodes relations, in which desire and choice are made an object of speculation or manipulation. The hunter captures, the poet captivates[94]. *Dolos* is a desire disguised as reciprocity or simply covered up – *krupton* – to hide the presence of an ulterior agency.

Not particularly wishing to advocate for a 'lexical method', with a poet like Euripides it is nevertheless important to keep the concrete sense of terms in mind. He generates a very richly textured world, dense with images and evocations of things, bodies, substance and sounds. His is a sensual world in which events and actions – not merely ideas, but the relation of terms to phenomena, signs to referents – are dramatized. Euripides plays precisely with the concrete and abstract sense of various given terms and designations. This is particularly apparent in the interplay of metonymies and the thematically redolent confusion of literal and figurative significations in *Bacchae*[95].

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[92] See also Hom. *Od.* 12.251-5, for a vivid simile of the angler, (with here men as washed up "gasping" like little fishes), a picture of the fish most reminiscent of Odysseus himself washed up and gasping on a beach at Hom. *Od.* 451-73.

[93] Aigisthos in the Odyssey, is Αἴγισθον δολόμητινHom. *Od.* 1. 300, 3.198, 3. 250, [3.308], 4.525, Klytemnestra: Κλυταιμνήστρη δολόμητις, 11. 422, σοὶ δὲ Κλυταιμνήστρη δόλον ἤρτυε τηλόθ' ἐόντι., 11. 439. Ares' discovery of his spouse's treachery *Od.* 8. 276-82.

[94] On the "enchantments" of *technē,* see Gell, 1988 and also his "The technology of enchantment and the enchantment of technology", 1992.

[95] See Segal, 1997 [1982]: 27-54; Thumiger, 2006, 2007: 189-96.

A *dolos* too is what Pentheus fears and finally suffers. He is a man who has been baited and who will become lured and finally broken into pieces, as flesh is when it is used to bait and catch further flesh. Something "crafty, treacherous" – *dolion*[96] – is what Pentheus had feared was being "devised against me", *es eme mēchanai*, by the Dionysiac Stranger[97]. Like Hesiod's Zeus faced with the discreetly smiling – *ēka* – Prometheus[98], he fears being rendered *aporos* ("resourceless, without means, without affordance") by a slippery, smiling counterpart. The wording of Dionysus' response to this allegation will be especially loaded, 805-6:

> Pe. οἴμοι· τόδ' ἤδη δόλιον ἐς ἐμὲ μηχανᾶι.
> Di. ποῖόν τι, σῶσαί σ' εἰ θέλω τέχναις ἐμαῖς;
>
> Pe. Oh, here now are you devising treachery against me.
> Di. What kind of a trick is it, if by my arts I wish to save you?

Hunting with traps is rather like that Promethean sacrifice that humans make to the gods, in which the gods were given the simulacrum of the best portion, a gift which is a *dolos*. It is a kind of theft, a trap in which the receiver is snared, and the giver gets away with it. Actaeon, the cousin of Pentheus, was a hunter whose relationship to prey had been reversed. He becomes the hunted stag, he loses voice and face and therefore social identity[99]. He loses social relation with his own dogs, whom he had reared, to whom he was fosterer. Reciprocity has become thwarted. His hounds "repay" their master, with the fate that anticipates Pentheus' own, rending his flesh savagely. Pentheus' *dolos*, his own desire dressed up and camouflaged, will be a bait not taken in by the *theriomorphosed* bacchants. *He* will become the bait to be shredded by his own family, who have ceased to be able to recognize relation at all. Pentheus is the bait on the hook of his own too mortal and suggestible desirousness. Too cunning, too guilefully focused on an object not properly evaluated, too unreciprocating: human desiring has been the baited trap in which humans have themselves been catastrophically caught.

The stranger is disarming. He represents the neutralization of human purposiveness and his subversions (for the survivors at Thebes and the Athenian audience) the entailed re-evaluations of ordinary purpose. The city is the objectification of human purposes, generations of intentions, desires, needs and their communalization, materialization and

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[96] 487, 805, 956.

[97] 805-6: Pe.οἴμοι· τόδ' ἤδη δόλιον ἐς ἐμὲ μηχανᾶι./ Di. ποῖόν τι, σῶσαί σ' εἰ θέλω τέχναις ἐμαῖς;

[98]Hes. *Theog.* 546-7: τὸν δ' αὖτε προσέειπε Προμηθεὺς ἀγκυλομήτης,/ ἦκ' ἐπιμειδήσας, δολίης δ' οὐ λήθετο τέχνης·. Reminiscent of the smiling Dionysus of unrecognized motives at *Hymn. Hom.* 7.14-15: ὁ δὲ μειδιάων ἐκάθητο/ ὄμμασι κυανέοισι.

[99] So at any rate do we vividly picture his fate when once we have read the unforgettable version of Ovid at *Met.* 3. 131-252.

common organization. The social world of the city modulates and attenuates desires and relations in its *habitus* or *forms of life*. The same social dynamic persists and is everywhere persons are: in the human world people compete with one another, if not (in ordinary circumstances) to consume one another's bodies, then to take possession of them in other more or less intricate, social or anti-social ways. Eventually, Pentheus will undergo a transformation in his desiring. His volition, dangerously weakened, like that of a man intoxicated, he will become a figure of fatally *loosened* will, of tragical velleity. It is by his very own desire, his own personal will, that Dionysus traps Pentheus. A lure is what is most undesirable dissembling itself as the desirable. Significantly, the *tyrannos* conceives of value, affordance and obligation, in those commercial or transactional terms, which form the basis of one face of city life. That face – the identification of the city as the banausic scene of transactions, commerce in honours, calculation, deception and competition for prominence – that vision of existence is negated or made no longer an absolute value here, in the proximity of Dionysus.

4.3 Just keep dancing: Belief as Stratagem

κεἰ μὴ γὰρ ἔστιν ὁ θεὸς οὗτος, ὡς σὺ φήις,[100]

In all social situations there inheres a more or less dangerous ambiguity, which emanates from the underdetermination of time and also from the concealability of intention, the cryptic, invisible nature of the mind, the difficult nature of other people (how to proceed in the social world, getting on with others) and of social life. One's fellows are not always amenable, *eutrepes*. Not only will they not be easily bent to one's own purposes (they are *agnamptoi*), but they are even so unruly as to have their own, which they regard as more important than one's own. Co-present persons are treacherous, or at any rate tricky, *dolion*; the gods – fantastic magnifications of mortals – all the more so. Hence did Solon say that "The mind of gods is in every way opaque to mortals". It is hard to know when it is the truth that is manifest, advisable always to assume hidden dangers, for one loses little if one over-attributes agency or the presence of person to that which does not contain (conceal) it, and one risks a great deal in presuming the absence of agency or personhood, which in the event turns out in fact to have been present, "there".

"Light is the expense" – κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα 893 – sing the bacchants, but they do not mean that it is easy to pretend, rather that it is not a great price to pay to have an authentic, deeper relating, one not predicated on competition. Dionysus has come to reclaim a kin-relationship

[100] "Even if the god is not he, as you say", 333.

for himself. A dangerous deficit in affective relations between persons in the *polis* is foreshadowed in the sibling rivalry of the daughters of Kadmos. It has been too late for the Kadmeians to learn the lesson that mortals must attend to their relations with themselves and with their co-presents. We have seen the deficiencies of the Thebans and the deficit in mercifulness of the son of Thebes, Dionysus. Their failure provides the Athenian audience with a photographic negative of strong evaluation and the absolute importance of certain qualities of agency, recognition of self and other as like self for healthy sociality.

Time and its habituations makes things what they are, transforms custom into nature; it is fallacious to 'denature' what people do by "historicizing" that, because the historical world is not different from the real world of continuous change and metamorphosis of the vital and contingent into the necessary and transcendent: this Dionysus affirms[101]. If Dionysus is a weak evaluator, this tragedy shows him inadvertently teaching the audience what stronger evaluation *might have* looked like. The "original sin" of *Bacchae* is the denial by the Kadmeians of Semelē's relations with Zeus, which was also a betrayal of the affective bond between kin (or was it the machinations of Hera motivated by jealousy or the irresponsible desirousness of promiscuous Zeus – the point is perhaps that origins are not absolutely determining, every situation originates in some prior one. There is a continuous dialectic of motivation and action, each informing the other endlessly, and the wise attends to what is at hand, *ta paronta*). Such affective bonds, relations predicated on emotion rather than form or calculation are being reclaimed by the poet – whose dramatic creations, mortal and immortal, teach us by example what ethical inadequacy looks like – as the authentic kind, the ones most to value.

While Teiresias counsels an open-hearted reception of the bacchants and their *chorēgos* (Dionysus incognito), Kadmos, as we have seen, is more politically minded. The former king of Thebes – the exiled wanderer from the realm of *mētis*, 'cunning intelligence' (for such is the sea, where alone the clever and technically capable survive), native of that nation of skilled and cunning seafarers, the Phoenicians – Kadmos has passed on his authority to his favourite grandson[102]. As we have seen, this old veteran is strategic, a man of *Realpolitik* as

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[101] 893-6: κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-/ ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν,/ ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον,/ τό τ' ἐν χρόνωι μακρῶι νόμιμον/ ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός. "Light is the expense to hold [*nomizein* "believe"] that this contains power; whatever it is that is divine [*daimonion*], this in time becomes upheld [*nomimon* "tradition", "customary belief"], and will always be of itself natural." Di Benedetto: "non costa fatica non porta danno/ ritenere che questo è ciò che conta:/ è il divino qualunque cosa esso sia/ ed è la norma in uso/ che nel lungo corso del tempo/ ha assunto la qualità dell'eterno/ e la naturalità dell'essere." Roux: "Il en coûte bien peu de croire à la puissance/ et du divin, quel qu'il puisse être,/ et de la tradition consacrée par les siècles,/ qui, toujours, est issue de la nature même." See also p. 167, § 3.3.11 p. 206 n. 301, § 5.5.3 n. 130, § 7.3 p. 396.

[102] Passed on authority 43-5: Κάδμος μὲν οὖν γέρας τε καὶ τυραννίδα/ Πενθεῖ δίδωσι θυγατρὸς ἐκπεφυκότι,
Favourite offspring 1316-22, esp. 1316-17: ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν (καὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ὢν ὅμως/ τῶν φιλτάτων ἔμοιγ' ἀριθμήσηι, τέκνον),

survivors tend to be. He suggests a politick wager on the authenticity of Semelē's posthumous offspring as being the son of Zeus, *kei mē gar estin*, "even if he is not"[103]. Pentheus will not take this bet, even though as Kadmos implies, there is little to lose and, either way, something to gain from recognizing Dionysus. To Pentheus' mind there *is* much to lose. Honouring an effeminate stranger, or the bastard son[104] of a dead aunt, herself dishonourable, will compromise his own dignity. It will imperil the *time*, honour and legitimacy, *kuria* (derived by birth) which, political man that he by nature is[105], he refuses to gamble away[106].

In *Bacchae* belief as "faith" and "emotion" is contrasted with belief as "calculation" and "strategy". The god of revelation, which is Dionysus, will clearly privilege one kind of belief over the other. The problem of knowledge is always topical with Dionysus. He wants a certain kind of relation with him, in Euripides' vision of Dionysiac religion, relations are essentially the *manner of knowing* persons. The quality of knowledge and the quality of bearing are inextricable.

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[103]333-43. See § 3.2.2 n. 49.

[104] Bastard son, Eur. *Ba*. 26-30: ἐπεί μ' ἀδελφαὶ μητρός, ἃς ἥκιστ' ἐχρῆν, / Διόνυσον οὐκ ἔφασκον ἐκφῦναι Διός, / Σεμέλην δὲ νυμφευθεῖσαν ἐκ θνητοῦ τινος / ἐς Ζῆν' ἀναφέρειν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν λέχους, / Κάδμου σοφίσμαθ', 244-5: ὃς ἐκπυροῦται λαμπάσιν κεραυνίαις/ σὺν μητρί, Δίους ὅτι γάμους ἐψεύσατο.

219-20: τὸν νεωστὶ δαίμονα/Διόνυσον, ὅστις ἔστι, the note of scorn here echoes with the earlier ἐκ θνητοῦ τινος, 39 and with the probably sarcastic question Pentheus put to the Stranger at 467: Ζεὺς δ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖ τις ὃς νέους τίκτει θεούς;

[105] Political man: 319-21, see § 3.3.6 n. 228.

[106] Effeminate stranger: τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, 353. We should not exaggerate the "femininity" of Dionysus, as sometimes the scholarship can tend to do. Pentheus is much more often designated as "female" (855, 912-17, 980). Dionysus is seen more as "attractive to women": 453-59. The notion that we have to do with an effeminate Dionysus is traceable to the understanding that Euripides' model, at least one of them, was the Dionysus of Aeschylus plays on the themes. See Aesch. fr. 60 in *Edonians* τίς ποτ' ἔσθ' ὁ μουσόμαντις † < – x > ἄλλος ἀβροβάτης ὃν σθένει† [in the lacuna before ἄλλος found in the *Suda* Sommerstein posits < γύννις>; Hermann and Friebel posited ἀβροβάτης for the manuscript's ἀβρατοῦς, in other words, we find a possible but not definite "epicene" Dionysus in Aeschylus, see Sommerstein 2008]. Dionysus is addressed by Lykourgos in a w ork with a very different tone as *gynnis* (in a line that recalls *Bacchae* 460-4, e.g. 460: πρῶτον μὲν οὖν μοι λέξον ὅστις εἶ γένος.) in the satyr-play *Lykourgos* fr. 61. 135 (ad Bacchum captivum)· ποδαπὸς ὁ γύννις; τίς πάτρα; τίς ἡ στολή;. On representations of Dionysus, from originally typically Olympian masculine (beard, seniority) to the later less masculine, beardless ephebe of the late 5th Century, see Carpenter in *Masks*: 185-206; Carpenter, 1986 and 1997; Jameson in *Masks*: 44-65 "The asexuality of Dionysus"; and Gherchanoc, 2003: "Les atours féminins des hommes : quelques représentations du masculin-féminin dans lemonde grec antique. Entre initiation, ruse, séduction et grotesque, surpuissance et déchéance".

4.3.1 *Morphēn brotēsian*: Anthropomorphisms

Stuart Guthrie's work represents an early instance of the "cognitive turn" in religious studies[107]. In *Faces in the Clouds*: *a new theory of religion*[108], Guthrie brought together his arguments into a theory of "religion as anthropomorphism". This work represents a recent permutation of that modern "intellectualist tradition" that reaches back to E.B. Tylor. The Victorian scholar's theory of the animist impulse that allegedly explains so many forms of religiosity in their "development" from primitive forms "upwards" was unfortunately hierarchical, tainted by the European's 19th C. colonial hybris. It was thereby seen as fatally compromised by the 20th Century, with its (admirably but not itself unproblematically) more scientific (and self-aware) approach to the anthropology of religion[109]. The value of Intellectualism for interpreting the religiosity expressed in Greek Poetry, and culture more broadly is, essentially even if only implicitly, repudiated by many of the ethological, functionalist, structuralist and ritualist readings of 20th Century scholarship on Greek Religion and Dionysus[110]. Yet, as I have been arguing, agency, which we must construe as very largely mental in character, is a fundamental element of cultural life and of its complex expression in Greek Tragedy. *Dianoia,* thought, is not less real or somehow posterior to *thumos*, passion, *orexis* appetite or *boulē*, "reflected on desire": these are dialectically related, each continuously shaping and becoming shaped in turn by the other.

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[107] Guthrie, 1980. This cognitive turn is most notably signalled in the publication by E. Thomas Lawson and Robert N. McCauley in 1990 of their very influential *Rethinking Religion: connecting cognition and culture*. Jennifer Larson's *Understanding Greek Religion: a cognitive approach* (Larson, 2016) is a very welcome discussion of Greek religion through the lenses of the cognitive science of religion. The category of 'Religion' is not unproblematic, as Larson discusses (see her Chapter 1 "What is Religion"), with reference to an important work on the question by Brent Nongbri, (Nongbri, 2011). On this question in another recent study of Greek Religion, see also Julia Kindt's *Rethinking Greek Religion*, 2012.

[108] Guthrie, 1993.

[109] Tylor, 1871 and on Tylor, a kind of rehabilitation or development beyond his work, one of the first modern anthropologists, see Guthrie, 1993. and Saler in Stausberg [ed.], 2009, for a critical appreciation of Guthrie and his influences. Note the appearance in 1892-94 of the two volumes of Rohde's important *Psyche: Seelenkult und Unsterblichkeitsglaube der Griechen*, a historicist interpretation of the god Rohde could not know would prove with the Mycenaean excavation of the 20th Century to be *echt* Greek. On Rohde and the historical, cultural formations of the 19th and early 20th Century, which have been formative for subsequent conceptions of Ancient Poetry and its interpretation, see Schlesier, 1994.

[110] On the idea of progress in Antiquity, see Dodds, 1973.

4.3.2 Agency Detection

Agency, its habitual detection by humans and its explanatory power in accounting for human belief in gods, is a key idea in Guthrie. Alfred Gell, focused rather on developing a true anthropology of art-works, a subtle conceptualization of agency and its nature and "distribution" through objects, represents an important recent contribution to an anthropology of art and person for the 21st century. Agency in both scholars is, quintessentially, always social. As Gell put it,

> Whenever an event is believed to happen because of an 'intention' lodged in the person or thing, which initiates the causal sequence, that is an instance of 'agency'. Putting the word 'social' in front of the word 'agent' is in a sense redundant, in so far as the word 'agency' primarily serves to discriminate between 'happenings' (caused by physical laws) and 'actions' (caused by prior intentions). 'Prior intentions' implies *the attribution to an agent of a mind akin to a human one, if not identical*. Animals and material objects can have minds and intentions attributed to them, but these are *always, in some residual sense, human minds, because we have access 'from the inside' only to human minds, indeed to only one of these, our own*. Human minds are inevitably 'social' minds, to the extent that we only know our own minds in a social context of some kind. '*Action' cannot really be conceptualized in other than social terms*.[111]

The doings of drama – its *dramata*: *ergon* as *epē* – ought not to be conceptualized in any but social terms. André Rivier, in his discussion of agency in Aeschylus[112], took emotional and psychological events effectively to be 'happenings'. They are never only such; they are always also 'actions', except when persons have become zombies. As actions initiated by non-human motives and persons (gods, Furies, *Atē*) they may seem to not belong to humans, but only happen through and to them. Rivier's *is* a theory of Tragic agency, only one locating agency beyond – *exōthen* – individual human agents. The actors of Tragedy are persons not zombies, and Tragedy *does* have a concept of "zombie"; that is what the maenad

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[111] Gell, 1998: 17, my italics. Cf. Dennett in one of the key texts in the vigorous debates about mind, consciousness, agency and intention, *Consciousness Explained*, ". . . consciousness, the special ingredient that turns mere *happenings* into *doings*", Dennett, 1991: 32, (his italics). For Giddens' definition of actions and agency, see Giddens, 1984: 5-13, 281-4, on intentionality and its not being the equivalent of agency, see 8-12. The importance of intentionality in its modern formulation (for it was a topos of scholastic philosophy) is traced back to the work of Franz Brentano, whose influence, via Husserl and Heidegger was immense for the 20th C. Dennett, 1985: 67: "Consider that warhorse in the philosophy of mind, Brentano's Thesis that intentionality is the mark of the mental: all mental phenomena exhibit intentionality and no physical phenomena exhibit intentionality. This has traditionally taken to be the *irreducibility* thesis: the mental, in virtue of its intentionality, cannot be reduced to the physical." It has been Dennett's project, as a natural scientist, to demonstrate the physical (not metaphysical, not mystified) basis of consciousness.

[112] Rivier, 1968.

is or the deranged killer of his own unrecognized family, like the Euripidean Herakles (Eur. *HF*).

Even if virtual, representational, having only ever artificial intelligence, characters in plays appear to have in place the minimal conditions for effective personhood, i.e. they can be *taken for* persons, *as* having minds, because they talk and are talked to, they see and are seen and know themselves seen. Even in a monologue, even the most isolated protagonist like Medea or Philoctetes – or more than isolated, in those who are alienated, made *other* even to themselves, like Euripides' Pentheus, Agauē, Orestes in *Orestes* or the Heracles of *Hercules Furens* – is presented as intelligible and as revealing something social in their aberrant asociality or anti-social condition.

Drama is by its nature a sociology[113]. The agency detected in Tragedy is always humanoid agency, for that is the only wavelength of agentfulness that human beings – poets, audiences, suffering protagonists – are equipped to detect. Humans trace a definitively human, anthropomorphic agency everywhere and always. They habitually engage with and feel engaged by human and humanoid agency. They can relate to and feel related to, only by the intelligible, the recognizable personhood, which belongs to motivated, communicating persons. Agency means human agency. Agency and its detection are expressive of the *Grundprinzip* of human existence: its sociality.

There are certain fundamental relationships that pre-occupy the Greek poets and thinkers. The relationship between *nomos* and *physis*, between intentions and circumstances, the disjunction between desire and reality in human life, the connection between what Gell calls "happenings" and "actions" and, further still, between "actions" and those special happening-like actions, which are the doings of super-natural agents. These are some of the fundamental issues of Tragedy. They are so, because they articulate the most basic concerns of a human social world constituted of social actors, mutually engaged, limited in their agency but also defined by their agency as inter-subjects of a common, material and symbolic world.

This world, though it looks given and even timeless, is always one of perpetual reconstitution and re-imagination – always radically temporal[114]. That is a dangerous thought in the weight it lends to profane, human agency; perhaps it is better left taboo, *arrhēton*, a "no-go" topic for talk, *abaton*, *sacer*. Nicomachus was an Athenian who may be said inadvertently to have paid the price for raising this delicate problem in his revision of the

[113] See Hall in Easterling, 1997: 93-126.

[114]See on agency and the *imaginaire* Castoriadis, 1975: *L'Insitution imaginaire de la société.*

sacral calendar. The unwelcome implication of too radical changes in religious practices and new beings recognized as gods, may be that responsibility for the gods, a most dreadful agency, lies with human beings[115]. The dangerous possibility that it is humans that give birth to gods had been raised in the 5th Century. At the end of the 5th C. BCE it is, like the uncertainty and dynamism of war, in the air[116].

Greek drama is performance: it is contrived to be experienced, to be perceived as sensation and intelligible action[117]. It is a performance always radically constrained – as is the mortal existence it dramatizes and reflects upon – by time: mortal, irreversible time, a constant shifting of perspective, the mind's intentional objects[118]. The stream of sensations and perceptions of time, which constitute human experience are made intelligible by the mind and thus assimilable into the fundamentally, unalterably *social* (shared, communicated and made common) order of human existence. Time and change and cognizance of change and of the uncertainty or indeterminacy of things, lend human life its special character and compel in humans an interpretive orientation. As Guthrie writes,

> . . . scanning for order and meaning is continuous, because the perceptual world always is *underdetermined and always coming into being* . . . The more successful an interpretation, the more it reveals and the more information is integrated into our understandings and actions . . . In making any interpretation we choose some context. Our choice depends on our purpose . . . we attribute various hierarchies to the world, of varying interest.[119]

Perception is rendered, through cognition, in a syntax of cause and effect, through which alone the otherwise disorderly flow of events becomes tolerable. For chaos, to adopt a Geertzian notion of culture, is unbearable to humans. Its threats to human life are too great, in that they remain indistinct, unpredictable and cannot therefore be assimilated into

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[115] On Nicomachus and his calendar which we know from a speech by the orator Lysias, see § 3.3.14 p. 149 n. 331.

[116] See the famous poem of the early 5th C. Xenophanes ffr. 13-14 [West, 1972], he presents an argument for the anthropomorphism of belief in gods based on a recognition of the relativity of cultural practices and beliefs; this is the spirit in which Herodotus, two generations later would look upon the great diversity of beliefs and practices amongst the diverse *ethnē*. See also Parker, 1996: 152-98 "The Fifth Century: New Gods" and "Annexe: Foreign Gods".

[117] Hall in Stuttard.

[118] Cf. Giddens on the 'reversible' time of routine. A special character of Tragedy is that it enacts irreversible scenarios within the parameters of the reversible, repeatable "routine" which is ritual.

[119] Guthrie, 1993: 44. The notion of "development", of the primitive and the modern, of timeless peoples and historical, i.e. agentful, self-conscious and self-modifying peoples, is, of course, still very much current in the imagination of even, indeed especially, educated people. It is a pertinacious kind of mythology, the basis of which are certain suppositions about agency and time and the temporal posture of different cultures. It seems that a given culture's self-conscious identification and constitution of itself in time is determining. It is of great interest that in Dionysus come together these very topics of time and its perception, spontaneity, the foreign and consciousness.

manageable, anticipative, human, symbolic economies. They cannot be transformed into the useful or valuable, cannot be neutralized, negotiated or warded off by human ingenuity[120]. Chaos is the unbearable absence of the agency, which co-ordinates reality meaningfully. The Pre-Socratic scientist's ordering of causes and discriminating of principles is a good example of how humans will either discern agents that shape phenomena or become the agents themselves discriminating chains of causation, taken to account for nature's "happenings".

Life is experienced as a stream of perceptions, as their recalling (or virtual re-experiencing) in memory and as their analysis and aggregation in communicable (shareable) concept. In communication between subjects there emerges a third order, outside of any particular individual, independent of any one human subject. There is a kind of collective, virtual subject, the collective perspective on things (also shifting in time but less perceptibly, more geologically, than the individual human's perspective), that we may call a culture. A culture is an instituting, the institution of objectivity, a trans-subjective perspective as an outlook on objective reality.

This is not only apparently objective; culture *is* real. It *does* subsist independently of individuals, even if paradoxically it can only be activated, through the life of biologically vital human beings, which are also discrete creatures. Culture – the forms of life in *Bacchae* designated as *paradochai, nomoi, orgia, praxeis, mythoi, synthetoi logoi*[121] – subsists outside of individual minds. It is constituted through the inter-subjective community that survives time and process. It is not *thnēton*, mortal, in the way that human bodies are. It is the set of practices and artefacts in common between social subjects. This is *objectivity* in that sense of the anthropology of ritual of Maurice Bloch[122]. That which is communicable is that which, by definition, has been redeemed from the flux of perception and the *idiotic* (in the sense of privately individual, purely self-involved) subjective experience of time. It has been made common, subsistent in a virtual order *between*, and not only *within*, discrete social actors.

Guthrie argues (drawing on a variety of other scholars in various fields and adducing much evidence for his contention about the ubiquity, also among modern "non-primitive" people, of his purported anthropomorphizing reflex)[123], that humans habitually detect agency in

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[120] On the ordering of experience and the imagined earlier indistinctness of things, before humans were supposedly endowed with the full faculty of mind by the great philanthrope, Prometheus, see Aesch. *PV* 441-50. With that origins-speech in mind, should we perhaps read that other great homage to the agency of the human mind in Sophocles at Soph. *Ant.*332-75.

[121] *Paradochai* 201; *nomoi* 484, *nomimon* 895, 1009; *orgia* 34, 79, 262, 470, 471, 476, 482, 998, 1080; *sunthetos logos* 297: συνθέντες λόγον.

[122] As argued in Bloch, 1992: *Prey into Hunter: the politics of religious experience.*

[123] See also Gell, 1998: chp. 7 "The distributed person", 96-154, esp. 121-37. For a critical evaluation of Guthrie's work see, Saler in Stausberg [ed.], 2009: 39-52.

phenomena. This is the effect of that survival strategy, by which humans and other organisms, caught in the struggle for survival, prepare themselves for the most dangerous contingencies in their context in order to best preserve themselves. Humans bet on agency behind effects, not mere random causes, but motivated and therefore more dangerous causes. The more "complexly organized" a form of danger, the more *agentful* – the more relevant it must be to a subject's assessment of its environment – the dangers to itself that are present. This reflex animism, a "deep biological design trick", in the words of one prominent biologist, serves as the primary means for organizing and analysing experience for survival in the constantly shifting circumstances of time[124].

Guthrie's is a very Kadmean account of the origins of gods. For Kadmos too employs a rudimentary "game theory" in his approach to Dionysiac rites and Dionysus' identity. Guthrie argues on a principle of struggle for survival and evolutionary imperatives for preservation. In his argument agency amounts to survival, continuance; an agent is an existent person of some kind, mortal or divine. This is agency expurgated of its ethical, volitional or psychological contents. Yet human belief in divine persons and interaction with co-present persons is much more complex that this picture comes near to suggesting. It is far less rational or calculating. Survival is very important to human beings but only a necessary condition, it seems, insufficient for what they consider a most *desirable* existence. Survival strategy and calculating profitable alternatives does not begin to exhaust human religious behaviour. The opportunism and pragmatism of Kadmos, the great survivor who loses everything, is just the problem in *Bacchae*. Affective qualities of relation, bearing,

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[124] Guthrie, 1993: 44-5. Cf. Dennett, 1991: 32, "Originally, to say that something was 'animate' as opposed to 'inanimate' was to say that it has a soul (*anima* in Latin). It may be more than just comforting to think of the things that affect us as powerfully animate; it may be a deep biological design trick, a shortcut for helping our time-pressured brains organize and think about the things that need thinking if we are to survive." On the notion that humans "animate" to understand in terms of most complex forms of organization and that this is the basis for the near-universal discernment of divine agencies behind phenomena and events, compare Burkert 1996: 26-7 and Luhmann's conception of religion as *simplification*, "reduction of complexity, in Luhmann, 1977. Tracing highest orders of organization may, it can be said, be the most effective way of *simplifying* a reality so radically "underdetermined and always coming into being". Burkert wrote, "By a process of reduction, religion provides orientation within a meaningful cosmos for those who feel helpless vis-à-vis infinite complexity . . . One way to effect a radical reduction of complexity is to devise a dualistic system, *positing containers into which to place any new phenomenon or experience*.", Burkert 1996: 26. Yet Dionysus is the god for whom none of the "containers" that humans have at their disposal is sufficient. Even the human being in the tragic container is a broken container, *sathros,* and overflowing from *koros*, surfeit and *hubris,* excess. The functional explanation of Guthrie, Burkert and Luhmann is ultimately unsatisfactory, seeming sometimes to ascribe to "religion" their own (scientist) desire or need to account for a diversity of strange phenomena by "reducing their complexity" to a functional imperative, which essentially transposes agency from the human subject or divine subject to the invisible "subject" of evolutionary change or "Biology". Persons reify to make sense of things but in their actions and interactions in the flow of everyday life, in which they all live, they are the knowledgeable agents of an articulable order and perpetually unfolding predicament. Giddens is excellent on this complicated but fundamental point. For his response to functionalism (then dominant in social and cultural studies) see Giddens, 1984: xiii-xxxvii, 293-7 and Giddens, 1979 passim. "Structuration" with its sophisticated conceptualization of the subject and agency is his response to structuralism and functionalism. On the limits of structuralism and functionalism from an anthropologist's point of view, see Geertz' classic essay "Thick description: Toward an Interpretive Theory of Culture", in Geertz, 1973: 3-30.

recognition; actions without outlook or apparently useful ends: these are most important to Dionysus. Dionysus and his festivals suspend economic life, suspend the transactional modality of relating and re-introduce the no less "real" Dionysiac modality of transformations – psychological, emotional, social, spiritual, epistemic. Transformation displaces transaction and exchange for a time. Kadmos, however, treated Dionysiac transformation as another kind of transaction, like one of Guthrie's game-theorists.[125]

A prudent survival strategy, a form of evolutionary *sōphrosynē*, the reflex to detect agency is in effect also a translation of the non-human – events and phenomena – and the foreign and the new, into the intelligible, predictable terms of the familiar, social world of *oikos* and polis. This may be described, in a sense, as a kind of *domesticating tendency*, an intellectual annexation of nature, time and contingency into the *familiar* economy of cause and effect and of relation. Humans, by this understanding, habitually draw "indoors", draw into controllable channels the flood of time. The *nomoi* are "inside", existence defined, distributed and divided up: they constitute the familiar environment where humans order experience. Beyond the social environment of persons lie danger and anomie. In just such terms Kadmos exhorts Pentheus, 331-2:

> οἴκει μεθ' ἡμῶν, μὴ θύραζε τῶν νόμων·
> νῦν γὰρ πέτηι τε καὶ φρονῶν οὐδὲν φρονεῖς.
>
> House with us, not outdoors of custom [*nomoi*: laws, definitions].
> For right now you are aflutter [*petēi*] and are thinking no thoughts.

The problem is that the horizons of inside and outside are complex and interpenetrant. There is an "outside" also *within human persons*. In the world of nature there seem also to be minds. The work described by Freud – *wo Es war, soll Ich werden*[126] – is ongoing and as fruitfully aporetic as the Socratic desiring after *sophia*, which never reaches its goal, being itself, this love, a kind of goal. Exactly so does Dionysus want acts – his *orgia* and *teletai* – to be their own goals, *telē*, rather than intended elsewhere. Civilization is predicated on irrigation and agriculture, the distribution of land and ownership, by border, *nemein.* Humans bring the wild river of phenomena into the carefully planned channels of the anthropic *kosmos*. That is an order for which the house – *dōma* – with its generation of specific and thoroughly human modes of time and sequestered space, may serve usefully as model.

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[125] Agency detection in Larson, 2016: 20-1, 75- 9.

[126] Freud, 1933. See § 1.3 n. 36.

4.3.3 Underdetermined and Always Coming into Being

The ascription of agency is the attribution of fundamentally human-like social and cognitive characteristics. It is the cosmic extension of the "theory of mind". Humans habitually order experience and invest it with meaning, which is to say they assign symbolic value and therefore further *relatability* to the contents of their experience. When something has a symbolic value, it has a social relation to the attributor and that is another way of saying that it is drawn into the syntax of cause and effect, of social agency. Experiencing and detecting agency is the main feature of human self-understanding and the understanding of others. Humans *do* constantly "theorize" (Dennett); they *are* (all competent social actors) always also "dazzling, expert sociologists" (Giddens). We may say this of them observing their skilled and continuous study, construal and anticipation of others, the meaning of their fellows' postures, gestures, talk and intentions. One way or another, human subjects (and this is pre-eminently the case in the theatre of Dionysus, the god of unrecognized motivations and deranged intelligence) are striving continuously to make experience and the objects of perception intelligible.

The phenomena of experience are "underdetermined and always coming into being". Interpretation is, thus, necessarily continuous. It expresses human needs and interests. Because of this indeterminacy or contingency inherent in phenomena, and because of the fact that interpretation always entails human perspective and concern, the human interpreter, according to Guthrie and others, rather *overestimates* dangers; it exaggerates and magnifies the agency that it posits to be standing behind effects[127]. The underdetermination of nature and events requires a commensurate over-anticipation from humans. Coping with effects at hand and preparing for future effects and unidentified causes, it anticipates highest risks. It prudently expects the greatest perils, which will be the most "complexly organized" sources of causation. That is human-like agency, providing a never subdued threat of *dolos*.

Humans may, like all animals, have aggressive instincts but they are set apart from all animals in the intensity with which they modulate, attenuate, mediate, communicate, sublimate, institute, articulate and deliberate upon their instincts, their desires, their primary cause or motivation, *archē*, at any given time. The notion that "*hexis* reposes on *boulēsis*" paints a misleadingly static picture. In human beings there is no reposure, no determining ground on which all other parts stand or from which they issue. Instead, human

[127] Guthrie's is, as he puts it, a "game theory" account of religious motivation – perhaps the natural theory of religion for the Reagan era and the Cold War world.

consciousness and unconsciousness is as subject to the constant becoming and underdetermination of all reality. It is precisely their radical temporality and the fact that they can take perspective on this temporality, the transience of themselves that means non-habitual acts are always possible, desires can change, thoughts can become the desire for something other than one's apparently spontaneous, immanent desires. The self is a virtual audience on its acts, the acts and the feelings motivating acts and motivating the wish for certain kinds of motivations.

Humans are creatures of concern. Critical for them is the meaning of their acts and those of their always socially, cognitively parsed others. The predominant "instinct" amongst human beings, the master impulse into which all others are subsumed, to which all others are continually suborned, is the social instinct. Biological drives are not somehow prior to this, not in some way more real or concrete. We may go so far as to say that the need for recognition, of a socially satisfying order of mutuality has been far more important to people in human history than any drive for more concrete, material forms of satisfaction[128].

As difficult and vexatious (and satisfying) as life with others can be, still humans everywhere, nearly always entangle themselves in a world of others (a cynic like Diogenes is the predecessor, a kind of typology, of that Abba Matoes quoted above, who turns away from the world)[129]. Troublingly violent and destructive as human history appears to us, it would be hard to try denying that human life is nearly entirely a story of the undiminishable drive to and difficulty of accomplishing common life with others – both virtual and physically co-present. Humans are so constituted that of course "social world" need not mean a real world of human co-presents. The monk in the desert really is in the society of

[128] An example, amongst countless, from recent history: Recent Nuclear negotiations with Iran, where the foreign minister and lead negotiator for Iran Javad Zarif, repeatedly and emphatically explained that for Iran the nuclear programme, for which they had suffered years of isolation and disabling economic sanctions, was primarily a question of their *timē*, "dignity", how they may think of themselves because how seen by others. Whether his assertion is true or not, what is most telling is that he thinks, or thinks that we think that "dignity" is a perfectly intelligible motivation. For the Russians a tyrant like Putin, although their economy has shrunk and their currency violently devalued on account of his polices, is a hero. This is not because they are irrational, but because self-interest as that is felt to be by humans is far more complex than is subsumed in the liberal logic of economic prosperity and social security. Those who think they have the upper hand (Pentheus, the West very often) think that practical "things" are at stake that can be solved technically. Those who feel snubbed (Dionysus, Iran) know the primary place of affect.

[129] "L'enfer, c'est l'autre" as a protagonist, in that very Greek 20th C. drama of Sartre's *Huis Clos,* puts it. For a truly profound reflection on l'autre and *l'alterité* see the work of Emmanuel Levinas. His discussion of presence and the face of the other may be fruitful for a strong reading of *Bacchae* and its masked god who comes to reclaim face, see esp. Levinas, 1972, 1974. Henrichs puts the idea of "the other" in interpretations of Dionysus in its historical place, in his essay in in *Masks*: 34 n. 54 "Like Gernet, Vernant derives his notion of the Other rather casually from the Platonic categories of *tāutón* and *to heteron*. In current usage, however, including Vernant's own, the Other is a decidedly post-Freudian, psychological category rather than a Platonic one. Vernant's Other invites comparison with Freud's definition of "das Unheimliche" . . . Rudolf Otto's concept of the sacred as "the entirely Other" ("das ganz andere"), which inspires a special kind of fear (cf. Schlesier 1987b); it is less comparable to the self/ other distinctions found in Lacan and Bakhtin."

the god to whom he constantly turns his mind, heart and words. The scholar in her or his library, deeply engaged with long dead authors and obviously fictional beings, is not outside of real socializing. Sociality has always the fictive, imaginative dimension which is only more apparent in those examples. That it is the case that people are so ultrasocial is attested to by the ubiquitous theme of love (in all its forms and permutations) across so many cultural expressions: forms of love, the binding and being bound to others, is the essentially social theme of a great deal of art and religion. This is the paradox from which issue the tragic and comic situations of so much poetry and of Greek drama most patently. Humans both seek ot and flee from the ultra-intense sociality of human *homilia*.

4.3.4 Wagering on divinity: si vous perdez, vous ne perdez rien

If perception is interpretation, that is so because in it there inheres always a certain measure of ambiguity. An explanation is always a kind of gamble. From one understanding, the objective of human endeavour, the perceptual and cognitive strategy that best assures human survival, is a bet in which one loses least but has most to gain. For Guthrie,

> Perception is active inference, a mostly unconscious process of hypothesizing the causes of a given sensation or cluster of sensations. Stated this way, "interpretation" and "explanation" become closely related enterprises[130]. Since multiple interpretations are possible, our choice of interpretations constitutes a guess. As the art historian Ernst Gombrich puts it, perception is betting.[131]

In the detailed and exhaustive work in which he lays out his thesis, Guthrie evokes Pascal's wager more than once[132]. For Pascal, famously, one ought to bet on the existence of god, without hesitation, because it is a bet which to lose means already to be lost (since unredeemable), but to win is to gain everything (an eternal and perfect relation with the highest and most perfect person):

[130] For a very important discussion of the hermeneutic relation of interpretation and explanation, their non mutual-exclusion, of great relevance to the student of Greek Religion considering the functionalism of Burkert, who has been so much the dominant scholar of his generation, see Lawson and McCauley, 1990, especially pp. 12-31.

[131] Guthrie, 1993: 42.

[132] Guthrie, 1993: 4, 6, 45.

> Pesons le gain & la perte en prenant le parti de croire que Dieu est. Si vous gagnez, vous gagnez tout; si vous perdez, vous ne perdez rien. Pariez donc qu'il est sans hésiter.[133]

Humans typically bet on agency and on highest orders of significance, to account for the events they perceive[134]. Inherent in perception is ambiguity, the uncertainty which is the unavoidable consequence of the fact of human subjectivity, of perspective which is always perspective in and of a world undetermined and in constant flux. The radical condition of perspective is the ceaseless flow of temporal existence. The wager on god, that paragon of agentfulness, may be viewed, as Guthrie does, as a transposing of the reflex wagering that is the stratagem of humans in the natural and social world in which they find themselves. Projecting divine beings is "a simple form of game theory":

> If perception requires choosing among interpretations and therefore requires betting, and if the payoff is *discovering significance*, then the first bets to cover – those with the biggest payoff – are bets as high on the scale of organization as possible. The discoveries of order they yield are those we most need . . . The strategy for discovering these patterns is, again, that of Pascal's wager, namely, guessing high. Pascal's version is that in the face of unresolvable uncertainty as to whether God exists, one should bet He does, since the gain if one is right outweighs the loss if one is wrong. *The principle is the same in betting something is alive*. This strategy also resembles the one supposedly once recommended to an aspiring youth: When opportunity knocks, jump. "But how do you know when opportunity's knocking?" asks the young man. "Just keep jumping," is the reply.[135]

Dionysus, however, and this is crucial, requires more than cunning strategy from mortals. It is not good enough to carry a thyrsos and just keep jumping. Strategy and the politick wager, the diplomatic reception and only tactical *Gastfreundschaft* will prove inadequate. For Dionysus is a god, for all his superficial similarities to a masterful person like Odysseus (the wanderer to the cities of men, the unrecognized homecomer, who takes revenge on those who deny his existence, who have not recognized his political and social prerogatives, his identity as king), is a figure much more akin to that Achilles who longs for authentic, emotional, affective relations and abhors transactional ones. Achilles as an incorporeal shadow, a disembodied mind in Hades, longs for the existence of corporeal sensation, even

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[133] Pascal, 1671: §54. He puts forward his famous wager at §§ 54-6.

[134] Guthrie, 1993: 47-8 "Animism, then, results from a simple form of game theory employed by animals ranging at least from frogs to people: the best bets are the highest, because those have the highest payoffs and lowest risks."

[135] Guthrie, 1993: 45-6, my emphasis.

the humblest life in the light under the sun, longs so pathetically for that very embodiment and sensuousness, which is the distinct mark of Dionysus, his festivals and gifts. The difference between Achilles and Dionysus is that the Achilles of the Odyssean *Nekuia* is a fluttering mind that has not the power to become embodied. Dionysus takes any form he wishes and penetrates the sublunary world of embodiment at will[136].

Navigating the social world of mortals and immortals in Greek Tragedy, as in the political context of human life generally, consists to some degree in taking care not to be taken in, in establishing strategies for clarification and verification and in remaining alert to the threat of falsification, *kibdēleuein*. Social others, recognisable as *like self*, nurse plans, disguise their ambitions and belie or exaggerate the reach of their agency. On a certain level, gods (in their also social world) and humans deploy lures – *doloi* – they bait and catch one another out, they mask and disguise their stratagems, and act so as not themselves to be caught out. Agency, like Heraclitus' *physis*, "likes to conceal itself"[137]. This is not an argument that all interactions are false or that human persons are always deceiving one another and on the lookout, only that there is a very consequential potential underlying social experience, viz. the ambiguity inherent in the interpreted character of experience.

The danger of falsification is inherent in all interactions. This is, furthermore, a complex or multifold danger, for the human world is not one, as we may have given the impression, of largely deliberate acts and weighed-up decisions. Rather, it is a shadowy context in which agents tend not only to overestimate the danger of others, but to overestimate themselves, their own reach and range and autonomy. When they are most manipulating, they are often most manipulated by some mute part of themselves, some desire unaccounted for or unacknowledged. This is the tragic dimension of agency detection unaccounted for by Guthrie's theory and its too logical or pragmatic terms. The danger of falsification incurred in social life is one incurred in the life of the individual too, in the society of the self. The great entanglement of baiters being baited and roles being reversed in turn, is the very inextricable predicament dramatized in Attic Tragedy.

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[136] Achilles' an intangible phantom that longs for embodiment, even if as the lowest slave, rather than to be the king of the realm of shades: Hom. *Od.* 11. 488-91.

[137] Heraclitus fr. 123 <φύσις> δὲ καθ' Ἡράκλειτον <κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ>. See also § 5.5.3 n. 158. For an exhaustive discussion of this fragment and seven possible translations of its only three words, see Hadot, 2004.

4.3.5 The Precipitative Context of Drama

Bacchae is a work in which being saved, freed and released by Dionysiac *will* and by Dionysiac dark *arts*, *technais emais*, the denied god's super-natural agency, is set against the failure of human will and its prosthetic extensions, technology. "The *daimōn* will release me himself, whenever I wish", Dionysus – *Lysios* – had warned Pentheus[138]. Pentheus is a man entangled with an inscrutable figure[139]. Dionysus is inscrutable but not an unknowable or unintelligible figure. His is an ethical inscrutability, he is not subject to the same critical assessment we make of human persons. Nevertheless, he makes himself known in the shape most easy for humans to interact with and he explains his motivations in the most perfectly intelligible human terms: a duty to family honour, a sense of personal outrage at not being recognized, a desire for an acceptable kind of relation with others, one commensurate with his identity.

This figure is in Thebes, in the deep irony of the work, to make himself known as a god, but to do this comes seen and revealed precisely in the form and even with the "nature of a man"[140]. The inscrutability of divinity and the opacity of the gods' plans and intentions on the one hand and on the other, the blindness of humans and their failure to *see* (and not only read or misread), their being always constrained to *interpret* what stands before them, is a constant feature of tragic situations. This is the quite exact configuration of protagonists we have found from the very outset in *Bacchae*.

More generally speaking, the opaqueness of others is a most fundamental problem and challenge in the human social world and consequently of the Greek poetic imagination and Greek Drama, the product and reproducer, by inspiration or instinct, of a contemporary social world and not simply of eternal verities. The world of Greek Tragedy is a *causal milieu*,[141] in which precisely such mundane human difficulties as typically (seemingly

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[138] λύζει μ' ὁ δαίμων αὐτός, ὅταν ἐγὼ θέλω, 498. Cf. *Hom. Hym.* 7. 12, where the Tyrrhenian pirates had 'wanted to' (*ethelon*) bind with painful bonds' Dionysus, καὶ δεσμοῖς ἔθελον δεῖν ἀργαλέοισι. On the liberation theme with Dionysus, see Seaford on 497-8. On 'demonisme' in Euripides see Rivier in *Euripide – Entretiens sur l'Antiquité Classique de la Fondation Hardt: Tome* VI, 1960: 43-86.

[139] ἀπόρωι γε τῶιδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένωι, 800. See p. 92 n. 206 and p. 125.

[140] 54: μορφήν τ' ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν.

[141] Precipitating Context: Oranje cites Beckerman's *Dynamics of Drama: Theory and Method of Analysis* (New York, 1970) in Oranje 1984: 55 ft. 139: "The action of a play is divided into *dramatic segments*. A dramatic segment is described by Beckerman (56 ff.) as an organic unity, i.e. a unity defined by activity, to which there is a 'precipitating context' and whose action follows a curve of 'becoming, crux, decrescence'. The actions of the characters within a dramatic segment are directed towards a goal, something which does not yet exist, and which must be brought into existence. Beckerman calls this a *project*: 'the project is the concrete focal point of a character's energy, and it is the project that the performer enacts' (71).".This will be a useful vocabulary for a social anthropology of Greek Tragedy, defined by its always still invisible goals. Acts are the context of further acts and persons are always precipitative and precipitated, directed towards a *telos* which they will come to recognize other than they may have expected, *elpizein*. *Elpides* are the Promethean recompense for ignorance of the

universally) preoccupy mortals are central: the impermanence of happiness; the insecurity of life; the fleeting nature of beauty, youth and health; the imbalance in social relationships; the misunderstandings and asymmetry between women and men; the contingency unforeseeably shaping things; the great difficulty of binding and holding together the diverse perspectives of individuals for a common social good; the destructive temptations of money and power; and the great danger that the excessiveness of desire and lust and energy – the super-abundant vitality of humans – represents for their relations with one other.

The opaqueness of others – mortals in one's vicinity and immortals who intervene unannounced into one's vicinity – this finds its corollary in the undiscerned nature of circumstances and their manner of hanging together, in the impenetrable contingency of things, how they chance to be – *kinduneuein*, *tuchein*. Pre-eminent here is the challenge of binding minds together. This, simply put, is what that great *polis* project is: to collectivize, to bind together *oikē*, households. Theseus founded Athens because he instituted a synoecist identity, bringing diverse groups together by identifying them as *parts* of what was to be imagined as having formed a whole. It is to unite and hold together persons, the house as person, the individual as person, and the group of houses, *kōmai*, villages (in Sparta) and the *dēmoi*, townships (of Attica), and to knit together the *atomic* bodies that comprise their respective *phylai*, tribes[142].

The task of the *polis* is to endure, to uphold or conserve itself, which means to sustain a centripetal impetus and hold off the constant threat of entropy. It holds together, i.e. *is* a "binding together" of houses: ξυνέχει δώματα·, 392, 1308-9. The work of the city – a never consummated existential labour – is to integrate the insides of the house and the insides of each mind into a common, public "consubjective" whole. This is a complex, never finished work of *Pflegen*. Euripides suggests that *this* survival depends not simply on pragmatic strategies of survival but, in a prior way, on an ethical quality of recognition, co-habitation and a higher kind of existence. Existence is something more substantial than mere subsistence. Demeter and the gift of bread may be necessary, but the quality of emotion and relation marked by Dionysus, god of wine, provides the sufficient condition for a good life, for *eudaimonia*[143].

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day of death, i.e. the unclosed character of human existence, its underdetermination (and the *elpides* are correspondingly 'blind', *tuphlai*) and continuous coming into being, cf. Aesch. *PD* 248-50.

[142] On the civic dimensions of the dramatic festival of Dionysus, see Goldhill, 1990, 1997; Cartledge, 1997; Easterling, 1997. On Athenian religion as "polis religion" see Sourvinou-Inwood in Buxton [ed.], 2000: 13-55 and for Tragedy and "polis religion", see Sourvinou-Inwood, 2003. For a recent re-appraisal of the notion of "polis religion" see Kindt, 2012: 12-35.

[143] Demeter, counterpart – *antipalos* – of Dionysus: 274-85.

Persons are, by nature, mutually regarding, self-reflexive, mutually interpreting, constantly monitoring, contentious, jealous, deceptive, competitive and alternately vigilant and careless kinds of actors, who are typically not duly *self-monitoring*. Perhaps what finally saves them and their cities from falling apart is the feeling of being under the surveillance of persons with a privileged perspective, whose monitoring of the human scene serves as an indispensable check, 386-94:

ἀχαλίνων στομάτων
ἀνόμου τ' ἀφροσύνας
τὸ τέλος δυστυχία·
ὁ δὲ τᾶς ἡσυχίας
βίοτος καὶ τὸ φρονεῖν
ἀσάλευτόν τε μένει καὶ
ξυνέχει δώματα· πόρσω
γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον-
τες ὁρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι.

Of unchecked mouths
And mindless lawlessness
The *telos* is misfortune.
The life of tranquility and the mind
Unshaken endures and holds together
Houses, for although far off
Dwelling in the *aithēr*, the sky gods
See what mortals do.

Humans construe persons and even objects, apparent non-persons, as agentful. They invest phenomena with the minimal conditions for a relatability, thus for social interaction and assimilation. A perceptual reflex that becomes a congenital cognitive strategy, this investment of non-human phenomena with the primary characteristics of human actors – intelligibility, interpretability, communicability – serves to bring order to experience[144]. Natural anthropocentrics[145], humans are marked by what Michael Tomasello has recently called "ultra-sociality"[146]. In the ultra-social context in which they live their lives, which they

[144] On the intelligible ("thick") description see Geertz' classic, 1973, *The Interpretation of Cultures.* From a philologist's point of view, taking the Geertzian premise of the intolerability for humans of disorder, see Gould's fine essay "On making sense of Greek Religion" in Gould, 2001: 203-34.

[145] For we seek to relate things, events, others to ourselves and the only way we can do that is by drawing them into a symbolic, social world, which is necessarily a human world.

[146] Tomasello, 2014.

constitute, humans are oriented always towards one another, towards other social agents[147]. Concealed, dissimulated, masked, the cognitive nature of human agency incurs a special problem for the social world constituted by intersubjective agents. It entails ambiguity, the problems of securing clarification, verification and authentication.

4.3.6 *Morphēn d'ameipsas*: Metamorphosis and Strategizing for Unpredictability

σὲ γὰρ αὐτὴν παντὶ ἐΐσκεις
For you liken yourself to everything.[148]

Dionysus has come to reveal, to assert and demonstrate the truth of his paternity, his defining relation. He has arrived to expose an undetected circumstance, a hidden, disputed fact. The disguised god is quite emphatic that this is his mission; this is his motive and the precipitating cause for the subsequent action. He has come to redress a problem of knowledge, which is also a problem of acknowledgement. His visit to Thebes, the first city in Greece he has come to, is for him above all a *deixis*, a demonstration, as he puts it in his frank and revealing prologue, an autobiographical sketch, 47-50[149]:

ὧν οὕνεκ' αὐτῶι θεὸς γεγὼς ἐνδείξομαι
πᾶσίν τε Θηβαίοισιν. ἐς δ' ἄλλην χθόνα,
τἀνθένδε θέμενος εὖ, μεταστήσω πόδα,
δεικνὺς ἐμαυτόν·

On account of which, to him and to all Thebes, I shall demonstrate
That I was born a god. Then into another country,
Once I have set things aright here, shall I shift,
Having shown myself.

His bacchants threaten to be brought out of the mountain by force by "the city of the Thebans", *Thēbaiōn polis*, 50. Should this occur Dionysus is here to lead the raving women as

[147] On the constitutive, not merely reflective, character of language acts, see Taylor 2016. On the complex nature of society's ongoing "constitution" by knowledgeable, agentful, social subjects, see Giddens, 1984: *The Constitution of Society: outline of the theory of structuration*.

[148] Odysseus to Athena. See Hom. *Od.* 13. 312-3: ἀργαλέον σε, θεά, γνῶναι βροτῷ ἀντιάσαντι/ καὶ μάλ' ἐπισταμένῳ· σὲ γὰρ αὐτὴν παντὶ ἐΐσκεις.: "It is hard to recognize you, goddess, for a mortal standing opposite you, even if he is very clever, for you liken yourself to all things."

[149] On this "deceptive prologue", for a discussion of how not everything promised is realized and the significance of this, see Thumiger, 2007: 182-3 nn. 76 & 77.

their "general", *stratēlatōn*, 52. For this reason he has done what is characteristic of Greek divinities – he has altered his own form, whatever that is, for "mortal aspect". We are none the wiser what the god's prior or original "form" might have been; all we can be sure of is that it was a form (he has "altered/swopped" and "changed" it after all), which contained this speaking identity. The unchanged element of this being, which is identical irrespective of the outward, bodily form, is telling us that it is called Dionysus and that it has the capacity to take different forms. It is telling us, furthermore, that its identity is the most crucially important question to itself. Its identity does not depend on its outward shape; it is an interior or somehow invisible property, which binds the current form to whatever its past forms have been. The god goes on to explain that it has gone so far as to exchange its "shape", *morphēn*, for the "nature", *phusin*, of a man 54-5:

ὧν οὕνεκ' εἶδος θνητὸν ἀλλάξας ἔχω
μορφήν τ' ἐμὴν μετέβαλον εἰς ἀνδρὸς φύσιν.

That is why I have transformed and taken mortal aspect
And changed my own shape into the nature of a man.[150]

The point of his disguise, this metamorphosis that gives him mortal appearance and a "man's nature", is lent very strong emphasis. In fact, he has already made the point in the opening lines of the work, where he had announced, 4-5:

μορφὴν δ' ἀμείψας ἐκ θεοῦ βροτησίαν
πάρειμι Δίρκης νάμαθ' Ἰσμηνοῦ θ' ὕδωρ.

I changed from a god's into the shape of a mortal
Here I am by the streams of Dirkē, by Ismēnos' fluid.

"Born a god", "being divine", θεὸς γεγὼς at 47, or simply γεγὼς, "having become" i.e. "being", is a phrase or term that will have an ever higher density and richer texture over the course of the work[151]. Dionysus is born a god, he *is* a god: being in the Greek is "having become", as being present is "having come", *hēkō*, 1. In some of his last words as he stands revealed on the *theologeion* (the upper rostrum of the stage-set typically reserved for divine or non-human speakers), he explains again that "although having been born a god", he has been "violated", "deprecated" – *hubrizomēn* – by the Kadmeians, καὶ γὰρ πρὸς ὑμῶν θεὸς

[150] As *nomoi* and *patrious paradochas* were presumably "contemporary references", so is *physis* here likely so too. See § 3.3.3 n. 61.

[151] See Conacher, 1967: 73 on the way that terms accrue meanings over the course of a Euripidean work.

γεγὼς ὑβριζόμην, 1347. He has been explaining and prophesying to Kadmos, making clear again *what* it is that he *is*, a son of no mortal father, 1340-1[152]:

> ταῦτ' οὐχὶ θνητοῦ πατρὸς ἐκγεγὼς λέγω
> Διόνυσος ἀλλὰ Ζηνός·
>
> This, not as one born of a mortal father, do I speak
> But as Dionysus son of Zeus.

"As a god", emphatically is he known amongst his worshippers. Pentheus and his family, like the raving Theban women, is a "birther", denying the legitimacy of Dionysus, denying his nativity and birthright. By contrast, even when in the form of matter (and thus we may reasonably expect, also when "in" the form of objects such as masks or idols). The bacchants identify him as one born of Zeus, having the status and identity of a god: he is a divine presence. So "being (born, come about) a god" he is poured, preaches Teiresias, 284-85:

> οὗτος θεοῖσι σπένδεται θεὸς γεγώς,
> ὥστε διὰ τοῦτον τἀγάθ' ἀνθρώπους ἔχειν.
>
> He, born a god to gods is poured,
> So that through him humans acquire what is good.

What Dionysus is, how he came into existence, is the fulcrum on which the balance of the action of this drama turns, certainly from his point of view. He comes to show himself and what he is, which is to say how he "came into being" became, so to speak, "manifestable"[153]. And yet what he is is emphatically belied, is disguised and reshaped by this transformation he has contrived. He comes unrecognizable to punish a non-recognition. *Morphē*, shape and shape-shifting, is both the evidence that this is a divine being and its manner of concealing its divine identity: at once revelation and dissimulation, giving knowledge and complicating it. Recognition is the primary problem here. And what must the protagonists recognize, what can they infer? It is certainly not something immediately "evident"; instead they must penetrate the evident and discover *nóos*, the "god-shaped mind", the divine intention behind the practices, forms and feelings that Dionysus brings into the city with him.

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[152] Cf. 367-9, where it is an important issue for Teiresias in what capacity, from what identity, he is saying what he is saying: Πενθεὺς δ' ὅπως μὴ πένθος εἰσοίσει δόμοις / τοῖς σοῖσι, Κάδμε· μαντικῆι μὲν οὐ λέγω, / τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ· μῶρα γὰρ μῶρος λέγει. Speaking without need for interpretation, straight 'from the heart', 'clearly' (τἀπὸ καρδίας σαφῶς) without ulterior motives or dissembled pretexts is a motif in *Bacchae* as it is in *Iphigenia at Aulis* (see Menelaus' sincere *captation benevolentiae* at Eur. *IA* 471-503, e.g. 475-6 ἦ μὴν ἐρεῖν σοι τἀπὸ καρδίας σαφῶς / καὶ μὴ 'πίτηδες μηδέν, ἀλλ' ὅσον φρονῶ.

[153] See 22, 42, 47, 50. Cf. 1200, for Agauē's gruesome "showing" of Pentheus. *Phanera* "the manifest": 501, 992, 1006, 1011, 1099.

4.3.7 *Krubdēn mēd' anaphanda*: Concealed, not Manifestly[154]

Gould, as we have seen, argued that one could not "follow home" the protagonists of drama even, of course, Shakespearean and 20th Century drama despite its premium on an intimacy and detailed, individuated characterization and promise of individual depth not found in Greek drama[155]. In *Bacchae* the chief character, to exploit Gould's notion for a sense not quite as he intended, has in fact come home. Dionysus, like other famous figures of Greek poetry – Odysseus, Orestes, Oedipus – has come home unrecognized and the problem of the play is a web of concealment and revelation. Identity, recognition and deception and all their implications for the nature of personhood *per se* are the constant interest of Greek poets.

The religious procedures for relating to gods (here we should hear the root sense of the term *religiosum* "re-binding"), recapitulate the communicative procedures between human social actors in everyday life. They transpose the same strategies for the divining of motives in the human social world, by which communication is ever possible[156], to the social relations with divine persons. Recognition and failure to recognize identities, to detect the nature of an interlocutor's agency, the fullness of his or her personhood is not *merely* a social error but represents an existential threat. That is a lesson the Kadmeians would learn too late in *Bacchae.* The lesson is that existence is not something separable from the social entanglement with others. That *is* existence – its contents are relations. There is never anything *mere* about social relations. The quality of relation between persons and between individuals and their own selves is not a peripheral or even secondary issue – the quality or bearing of persons is of absolutely determining importance.

Although born to the House of Kadmos, Dionysus is "excessively harsh" – ἀλλ' ἐπεξέρχηι λίαν, 1346 – and destroys the house, laments Kadmos: Βρόμιος ἄναξ ἀπώλεσ' οἰκεῖος γεγώς, 1250. In the high pathos of Kadmos' apostrophic address to a Pentheus (the person having a mind and the capacity to relate, not only the physical body) who is no longer there, Kadmos "is become childless of male offspring" ἄτεκνος ἀρσένων παίδων γεγὼς, 1305[157].

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[154] The shade of Achilles, a man who did not know how to hide his feelings, is counselling the cunning Odysseus in the Underworld to return home "undercover not conspicuously", see Hom. *Od.* 11.455-6: κρύβδην, μηδ' ἀναφανδά, φίλην ἐς πατρίδα γαῖαν/ νῆα κατισχέμεναι, ἐπεὶ οὐκέτι πιστὰ γυναιξίν.

[155] Gould, 1978.

[156] See Tomasello, 2010, 2014.

[157] On apostrophe, see § 6.1.2 and cf. the brief theatrical address to a future "Iphigenia", who too will not be there, in that case entirely because of the speaker's future (the Agamemnon projected by the Agamemnon speaking) self not having known how to be properly loyal,

He is bereft of the child "born of his own child" παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς, 1309. The social breakdown has been an existential breakdown and has been brought about by the cognitive collapse which is both Dionysus' punishment and also the *punishment in itself*, which social derangements represent for humans. Pentheus himself had addressed his closest kin, who "was not there" in another sense and who could not detect that Pentheus was "there", when in the moments before his death he reveals himself, tearing off his disguise and vainly struggling to re-establish identities, 1115-24. The play, like all Tragedies, depicts humans in the predicament of being subjects amongst other subjects, misprized as objects.

Shifts in appearance are throughout contrasted with the fact of an original and defining *genesis*, or "coming into being" (birth and taking form are repeatedly evoked in the drama). Such is it even in the case of the foretold metamorphosis of Kadmos and his wife, Harmonia, daughter of a god, Ares, the god of war who himself at some point took mortal shape to engender a hybrid of mortal and immortal, 1330-2:

> δράκων γενήσηι μεταβαλών, δάμαρ τε σὴ
> ἐκθηριωθεῖσ' ὄφεος ἀλλάξει τύπον,
> ἣν Ἄρεος ἔσχες Ἁρμονίαν θνητὸς γεγώς.

> Changed, you shall become a serpent, and your wife
> Turned into a beast (*ekthēriōtheis'*) will change her shape for a snake's,
> Harmonia, whom you got from Ares when *he* took mortal form.

Man and god dance around one another in *Bacchae*. Pentheus does not know how to dance or that he dances, but the central parts of the drama are very much social interaction as dance. To Pentheus' mind this is the dance of wrestlers[158]. To the spectator it is a kind of

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not having valued the right values and relations, at Eur. *IA* 462-4. Cf. Eur. fr. 76 from the *Alcmeon in Corinth*, performed alongside *Bacchae*: ὁρᾶτε τὸν τύραννον ὡς ἅπαις γέρων/ φεύγει· φρονεῖν δὲ θνητὸν ὄντ' οὐ χρὴ μέγα.

[158] Wrestlers dancing around one another: Teiresias refers to Dionysus' moist gift of wine as the counterpart, literally "wrestling opponent", of Demeter the dry, 278-80: ὃς δ' ἦλθ' ἔπειτ', ἀντίπαλον ὁ Σεμέλης γόνος/ βότρυος ὑγρὸν πῶμ' ηὗρε κἀσηνέγκατο/ θνητοῖς. In the first moments of their first meeting, Pentheus mockingly identifies Dionysus as no adversary for the wrestling ring, 455: πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναὸς οὐ πάλης ὕπο [cf. Pl. *Phdr.* 239d.]. At 543 the bacchants in turn call Pentheus not a human but "like bloody giant wrestling against the gods": φόνιον δ' ὥστε γίγαντ' ἀντίπαλον θεοῖς. In this light we might also read those memorable words of Pentheus about being "entangled with an unmanageable stranger", 800-1: ἀπόρωι γε τῶιδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένωι, / ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται, where *aporos* has that concrete sense of "finding no affordance", "no purchase", see p. 89. Further on *palē*, wrestling with gods and men, see also § 4.5. For discourse and argument as wrestling see, e.g. Pl. *Phdr.* 236c 1, where not long after he will call the atmosphere very Dionysiac and himself in a state of dithyrambic inspiration, blurring the lines, even in that peculiar jesting way that was Socrates, between discursive and *manic*, Pl. *Phdr.* 238d 1-4' see also Pl. *Sym.* 215c, where Alcibiades claims of Socrates that he has the same enchanting power as the muscial satyr Marsyas, differing from him only in that he achieves the same effect of charm "with simple prose rather than with flutes", Pl. *Sym.* 215c 6 –d1: σὺ δ' ἐκείνου τοσοῦτον μόνον διαφέρεις, ὅτι ἄνευ ὀργάνων ψιλοῖς λόγοις ταὐτὸν τοῦτο ποιεῖς. The enchanting, slippery

snake dance, performed by the charmer Dionysus. The wrestler has a clear *telos*, to make his upright opponent prone, (just as the wine god, to excess, can make mortals prone). The dancing of bacchants and of Dionysus seems pointless to Pentheus, movement without objective; it is undignified, it is not moving towards the obtainment of any kind of value, as he conceives that. Just before the extended "dance" around one another is about to begin, the servant has brought in a disguised Dionysus, who calmly maintains his singular imposture, 438-40[159].

Pentheus will more deeply confirm the picture of a man always taken in by outward aspect. He betrays this weakness for appearances and self-revealing deductions when he infers lewd motivations in the Stranger. The inference is really a form of weak interpretation, revealing his own habitual and feeble grasp of the nature of the relation between real intention and apparent or deducible motivation, 453-54:

> ἀτὰρ τὸ μὲν σῶμ' οὐκ ἄμορφος εἶ, ξένε,
> ὡς ἐς γυναῖκας, ἐφ' ὅπερ ἐς Θήβας πάρει·

> But, Stranger, in body you are not misshapen (*amorphos*),
> To women, for which very reason you are here in Thebes.

The operative paradox underlying things here, is that Pentheus should remain open to the Stranger, his meaning and motives, *xenos*, a guest in the city, *precisely because* he is inscrutable, as all people can be (and that, most paradigmatically foreigners, newcomers, different and unfamiliar persons but also, sometimes most so, one's most familiar social others). Here the *xenos*, guest, will turn out to be the *xenos*, host, the native of the city and master of the city, who gives his gifts, wants the citizens' respect and controls its destiny more than this human king ever did. A stranger turns out to be both more alike and more opaque than the young king had fathomed and so ever are social actors to one another, more alike each other in their care, concerns and motivations and having more depth, more hidden recesses and "ethical substance" than they are often ascribed. The tragic context, this vicinity and proximity of Dionysus, constitutes a social and ethical predicament: how ought mortals to know how to believe; how recognize others and self; how to integrate the new, the unfamilar, that which seems dangerous but may be be curative and even redemptive.

Socrates – misidentified introducer of new *daimones* and corrupter of the city's youth – who causes mortals to revise their notions of what their true identity is, is a most Dionysiac figure, even if his mode is discursive, *Talk* rather than *Song*.

[159] See § 2.2.5 p. 82 for text and translation of these lines, also p. 363.

Pentheus' interest in the Stranger's looks reflects both something about Pentheus and about all persons: everyone *reads* their co-present social others, infers the quality of their minds and motivations from the apparent character and features of their aspect and doings. Interaction rituals are interpretive encounters,[160] and this, both banal and fascinating, truism of social life is something made evident in Greek Tragedy and in these scenes in *Bacchae*. Pentheus' interest has been read by scholars as revealing a latent homoeroticism or the sarcastic contempt of a puritan in the mould of Ion or Hippolytus. It must, nevertheless, be said that the Stranger will quite reasonably stand out for his ephebic attractiveness here, without our really needing to impute any too exceptional or deviant psychological condition to Pentheus.

The representation of Dionysus has undergone a visible change in the latter half of the 5th Century. In vase-painting the image of the god has itself experienced the rejuvenation, which his wine usually brings mortals and which Kadmos and Teiresias appear to undergo in the first episode[161]. From about the last quarter of the 5th Century, Dionysus at Athens is no longer the bearded Olympian senior of earlier tradition[162]. This god disguised becomes manifest (he is depicted) as a young man. He has an erotic beauty that seems to frustrate any too strict notions of gender; he is beardless but a man, his very form representing a temporal cusp, *kairos*, that moment in the life of the body when it can seem the very paragon of beauty, 455-9:

> πλόκαμός τε γάρ σου ταναὸς οὐ πάλης ὕπο,
> γένυν παρ' αὐτὴν κεχυμένος, πόθου πλέως·
> λευκὴν δὲ χροιὰν ἐκ παρασκευῆς ἔχεις,
> οὐχ ἡλίου βολαῖσιν ἀλλ' ὑπὸ σκιᾶς
> τὴν Ἀφροδίτην καλλονῆι θηρώμενος.
>
> For your locks are long, not cultivated for wrestling,
> They flow over down your cheeks, full of desire;

[160] For Goffman's definitions of "interaction", "encounter", see Goffman, 1959: 15-16 he offers some definitions: ". . . interaction (that is, face-to-face interaction) may be roughly defined as the reciprocal influence of individuals upon one another's actions when in one another's immediate physical presence. *An* interaction may be defined as all the interaction which occurs throughout any one occasion when a given set of individuals are in one another's continuous presence; the term 'an encounter' would do as well." For his conception of "performance", see § 6.2.2 n. 67.

[161] 187-90, e.g., 189-90: ταῦτ' ἐμοὶ πάσχεις ἄρα· / κἀγὼ γὰρ ἠβῶ κἀπιχειρήσω χοροῖς.

[162] Carpenter, in *Masks*: 185 "From his first appearance in art ca. 580 B.C. until the last quarter of the fifth century, the Dionysus of Attic vases is a bearded adult, usually fully clothed. Then, around 425, this form is all but replaced by Dionysus the beardless youth, who is usually naked (or only partially clothed). The change is first seen in sculpture from the Parthenon, but soon thereafter it appears on vases and quickly becomes the dominant form.", cf. also Diodorus' remarks on the 'two forms' of Dionysus, *dimorphon*, at Diod. Sic. 4.5.2.8 – 4.5.3.1

> And by contrivance you have pale flesh,
> Not for the sun's beams, but for pursuing
> Attractive Aphrodite in the shadows.

How else ought Pentheus to read this stranger and how intelligible that he infers as he does, (his reactions are not entirely, as the entreating Kadmos put it, "outdoors from custom" θύραζε τῶν νόμων, 331). What place could a "man" like this leader of bacchants have in the city organized, defended and ruled as it supposedly "must be" by mature men (bearded, no longer having the ungendered, sexually almost indistinct bodies, skin and hair that belong to children[163])?

Much attention, it will be clear, is paid to outward form in *Bacchae*, to evident, outward appearance and hidden intents, concealed meanings. Dionysus exhibits the ease of transformation we should associate with gods and certain "god-like" figures, like *dios Odusseus*. Pentheus, on the other hand, exhibits a deadly failure to penetrate disguise, and betrays also a clumsiness with his own disguisement[164]. He remains always excluded from the true nature of motivations in others and himself; he relies exclusively on an external conception of mind and quality of mind as conforming to types. He is thus easily deceived in expecting always deception and pretext. The doubleness of things, the nature of the relation between an apparent inside and outside, has eluded him. He has not had the versatility, which may have led him to new kinds of relations, emotions and perspectives. He is hopelessly caught up in the cosmetic, the façade, *politesse,* the struggles at the gates and in the yard, such struggles for face and status that constitute life lived under the eyes of one's "square-shaped" others[165].

Like Dionysus, Pentheus also wishes to accomplish a *deixis*, an "exposure". He wants to show that Teiresias is a fraud, that the seer has not the depths of knowledge he claims, but is

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[163] The reason, for example, that in the myths Achilles could be raised as a girl. Gender can be seen itself as a function of time in the biological life of the body, which when it walks on four feet is almost indistinguishable in this regard; when it walks on two, is dressed distinctly, speaks, has strength and grows hair differently, but when it approaches the phase of "walking on three feet", old age, it starts to become once again, ever less distinct. On Achilles' childhood as a girl see Scholiast on Homer's Iliad, xix. 326; Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 13.162ff., Pseudo-Apollodorus, *Bibliotheca* iii. 13. 8, Statius, Achilleid, ii. 167ff.

[164] He is ridiculous in his undercover outfit of a female bacchant at 925-70. His incapacity to dissemble his form is dramatized in his failure to find the invisibility amongst the bacchants that he had expected (ὡς ὁρῶιμεν οὐχ ὁρώμενοι 1050); so in his spy's vantage point he is more seen than seeing, 1075-6: ὤφθη δὲ μᾶλλον ἢ κατεῖδε μαινάδας·/ ὅσον γὰρ οὔπω δῆλος ἦν θάσσων ἄνω. At 1115-21 his failure to be disguised has led to a moment of terrible *anagnōrisis* (κακοῦ γὰρ ἐγγὺς ὢν ἐμάνθανεν, 1113) and another ironic failure, this time futilely tearing off his ineffective disguise he fails to become recognized, 1115-6: ὁ δὲ μίτραν κόμης ἄπο/ ἔρριψεν, ὥς νιν γνωρίσασα μὴ κτάνοι.

[165] 319-21: ὁρᾶις; σὺ χαίρεις, ὅταν ἐφεστῶσιν πύλαις/ πολλοί, τὸ Πενθέως δ' ὄνομα μεγαλύνηι πόλις·/ κἀκεῖνος, οἶμαι, τέρπεται τιμώμενος. Cf. the vivid portrait that the angered Menelaus paints of his political brother and his desire to be well thought of at Eur. *IA* 334-49.

in fact a mere surface, his motives plain[166]. The king will consistently pay every attention to the exterior of Dionysus. Before he has even encountered him, the defining feature of the Stranger is his form, a "woman's form", *thēlumorphon*, 353-4:

> τὸν θηλύμορφον ξένον, ὃς ἐσφέρει νόσον
> καινὴν γυναιξὶ καὶ λέχη λυμαίνεται.
>
> The female-looking *xenos*, who is introducing a new
> Epidemic amongst the women and defiling their beds[167].

"Female-form" appears here to be a peculiarly malleable kind of stuff. Just so in Hesiod was the first woman a *plaston parthenon*, a "moulded maid", an anthropoid with only artificial intelligence[168]. Of women it is inferred, apparently, that they are especially susceptible to the veiling and making-up – *plastein*, *katakosmein*, *paraskeuē* – of the face, that is to say, to the dissimulation of the "real" mind within[169]. It reads consistent in Euripides that his Helen, the most captivating face in history, like this *thēlumorphon* son of Thebes, could be such an extreme example of falsification as we find in Euripides' drama *Helen*, produced in 412 BCE, just 7 years before *Bacchae*. There, as with Dionysus, a piece of the *aithēr* is broken off to make a decoy to be taken hostage, *homeros*, a second Helen[170]. The real, *organic* Helen has thus never eloped and was never at Troy. Menelaus' wife has always preserved intentional integrity, the objects of her desire and her actions have never been impure. Through the artificial we discover a more authentic or deeper person in Helen. Yet the general view seems to be that women (and those, like the Stranger, who look like women), enhance or use subterfuge only to falsify their true identity.

By true *identity* one usually means actual and not only apparent *intentions*. For people the distinction is important. The authentic identity is the *intentional identity*, the character of one's intentionality. Around Dionysus, at any rate, identity means the identity that desires

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[166] The conventional duel between kings and seers in epic and tragedy, his hybristic kings – Oedipus, Creon, Agamemnon, Pentheus – typically accusing priest figures of venality, see on seers also § 2.2.1.2 n. 103, § 3.3.11 p. 141, § 5.2.2 n. 13.

[167] Note the ambiguity of λυμαίνεται – either "defile" or "cleanse" – *LSJ s.v.* Perhaps a *Paradebeispiel* of Pentheus' tendency to say more than he means, to speak the truth only *hekousion* – involuntarily – and not consciously or fully intentionally.

[168] Pandora was Zeus' fabricated person, a *dolos*, used to dupe the slow-witted Epimetheus who so easily took the bait, which is this kind of gift, see Hes. *Theog.* 550-616 and Hes. *Erga*. 59-105.

[169] On this theme see Zeitlin, 1985 "Playing the other: Theater, Theatricality and the Feminine in Greek Drama" 63-96, and there esp. 84-96 "Mimesis".

[170] *Homeros*: "pledge, "decoy" fashioned from *aithēr*: Dionysus: 288-97. Helen Eur. *Hel.* 31-51.

and holds its wishes to be its own, rather than in the phenomenal, falsifiable sense of, say, gender, class, ethnicity[171]. Identity in *Bacchae* is the wishing with which persons identify.

Ironically for one always expecting treachery, it never dawns on Pentheus that the stranger may be disguised, that by this very Dionysiac reversal, the authentic may be what is veiled; he thinks the foreigner's motives are all too apparent and that his identity is clear, not opaque. It all strikes a chord with that notable formulation of Dionysus at 55, where he has told us explicitly that he has taken a "man's nature", *eis andros phusin*. This is *impersonation* in the strongest sense, becoming a person and not *only* the imitation of some person. What does that mean, if not that he has taken on the nature of someone, which is to have been born and be constituted of a body and a mind pullulating with thoughts and desires, which are apprehended as the contents or material that constitute the self. This is a sophisticated theatre, the tragic equivalent of a farce, but one in which apparent identity and actual, intentional identity are repeatedly confused.

Pentheus will himself be led through the streets of the city, a man made risible in a woman's form, *gunaikomorphon*. He will have been poorly transformed, decked out in an only too penetrable cover, 854-56:

> χρήιζω δέ νιν γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν
> γυναικόμορφον ἀγόμενον δι' ἄστεως
> ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρὶν αἷσι δεινὸς ἦν.
>
> I want him to incur ridicule among the Thebans
> As he is led through the city in a woman's shape
> For his earlier boasting, when he was so scary.

Recalling, for example, the Athena of *Odyssey* 13, Dionysus is seen as a master of disguises who plays along with an all too easily detected, "uncovered", mortal cover. In the famous transvestiture scene that is so clearly backlit by Pentheus' earlier first encounter with Dionysus[172], Dionysus flatters the king for his disguise; he is "in form quite suited to one of

[171] See Nietzsche's discussion of this point at *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, 1882: Section 361, where Nietzsche is discussing "Vom Probleme des Schauspielers". Those disadvantaged in the organization of the social world – women, Jews – have to become actors, "Das Weib ist so artistisch". That is certainly the case in Euripides and a thread picked up by that most Euripidean of Roman poets, Ovid.

[172] Where his focus on the Stranger's trappings is so telling. He alleged they were designed in order to catch women. It is a logical misstep, an inference that exposes his own intentional posture. There is no evidence of such 'womanizing'; Pentheus simply deduces the meaning of effects from the causes he thinks always explains human behaviour.

the daughters of Kadmos", πρέπεις δὲ Κάδμου θυγατέρων μορφὴν μιᾶι, 917[173]. Pentheus is become now the falsified progeny, which accusation about himself, Dionysus has come to Thebes to refute.

4.3.8 *Philoxeinoi, nóos theoudēs*: "Welcoming strangers and having a god-fearing mind"[174]

The Greeks endowed their gods with idealized bodies and the typical features of the human social world. Greek gods are characters invested with specific identities, backstories, biographies, objects that function as stage-props (Hermes' staff; Athena's aegis; Dionysus' *thyrsos* and *lamaps*, torch; Zeus' thunder-bolt, Hephaistos' fire; Herakles' leopard skin and club). Gods are said to have temperaments, preferences, desires, a capacity for pleasure and even pain and a most humanoid tendency to suborn whatever means they can devise to accomplish their very intelligible objectives. Gods, in human culture, are persons with whom humans, in any number of forms, on any number of models of relation, interact[175]. We may safely posit that, in the broadest sense of the term, gods are projected persons with which humans must be able to *socialize*. In any number of ways they must feel interacted with or that there were the potential for any kind of interaction or communication.

Greek mortals imputed "mind" to their immortals. They had necessarily to be social persons and the minds they projected onto the gods, were the minds they felt themselves to possess. They imputed precisely that part of mortal nature, which is most ambiguous and irreal, so mysteriously loosened, apparently, from the bonds of time. Ultimately, the structure of the gods' will is human and their emotive responses make them very intelligible (even if terminally unknown) and, more to the point, *sociable* (in the sense I am using this term of "capable of having a relation with"). The will of the gods, like those of human persons, is concealed from us, unknown but imagined to be intelligible, to issue from sources that are

[173] "Chased down and goad to madness" the "female-imitator a frantic spy on maenads"; the bacchants goad on the (absent) maenads who are otherwise blind to symbolic distinctions, who have lost their own "social forms", "forms of life": 979-81: ἀνοιστρήσατέ νιν/ ἐπὶ τὸν ἐν γυναικομίμωι στολᾶι/ λυσσώδη κατάσκοπον μαινάδων.

[174] *Nóos theoudēs*: Hom. *Od.* 13. 187-202, Odysseus has washed up in Ithaca but does not yet know it, not recognizing the home that will not recognize him; Athene has cast a mist *achlus* over things, a concealer of herself and of the man she loves most. Odysseus groans, he wonders if he has been washed up amongst violent savages (ὑβρισταί τε καὶ ἄγριοι οὐδὲ δίκαιοι, 201) or amongst sociable persons who recognize others, φιλόξεινοι, as he puts it, people who "relate to", "value", *philein*, strangers *xenoi*, who do so because they have the mind (social, self-reflexive, self-assured and not only impulsive but cultivated) which is god-like: καί σφιν νόος ἐστὶ θεουδής, 202.

[175] For example: master-slave; patron-client; parent-adult; king-subject; supreme judge-polity; inscrutable, immortal force-hapless, ephemeral; beneficent lord-indentured labourer; distant humanoid sovereign-freewheeling, cunning adventurer; or as relations of reciprocal service or friendship, etc.

not chaotically inconceivable. If we did know them they would be understandable because divine persons have an agency – a *nóos* – necessarily anthropoid.

Above all it is their language, the mutual discoursing, politicking, scheming; the laughter and tears; the anger and rage and vindictiveness, the memory of sleight nursed, the dignity stood on; the favouritism and slipperiness of the gods that make them so *socially* (and therefore so very immediately) intelligible. Similarly, it is the pathetic content of drama, (rather than the formal, ritual or theatrical outlines[176] or so-called philosophical ideas[177]) in which its effective power and meaning is to be located. Dramatic persons, like Dionysiac gifts and Dionysiac sickness, are communicable; in Dionysus they are even transferrable. The relational and social character of existence is manifest in Tragedy. Its topic is precisely the life of subjects *qua* subjects and the dangers that beset the common life of persons who are always both unique and intelligible.

It is through their attribution of *nóos theoudēs* (the "god-fearing" by which in fact is meant the most humane mind) that gods are socially and cognitively realistic, through which any kind of social relation between mortals and immortals is ever possible. Gods have that property which is a fascinating subject of Greek Drama: they have insides, *phrenes*, mind. They necessarily have minds, however, in a lesser way than do human beings, since gods are derivative of human purposes. If the action of *Bacchae* seems to contradict this, we need

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[176] As in the dramatic effectiveness of the "opportunist reading" by which inconsistencies in characterization are explained through an appeal to dramaturgic effectiveness: see Easterling, 1973: 5 "the opportunist view, undiluted *Tychoismus* as propounded by Dr. R. D. Dawe . . . The implication of this is that once you have shown how dramatic considerations take the place of psychological ones you have answered all your questions: there is no need for a reason, other than dramatic effectiveness, why a particular action should have taken place.", see also Thumiger, 2007: 21-2 on this "critical perspective . . . stigmatized by Garton as the 'chameleon view', according to which characters are, so to speak, 'creatures of the situation', whose behaviour and discourse change as a mere function of the dramatic purpose within the scenic context", traced back to Tycho von Wilamowitz-Moellendorf on Sophocles, 1917, see also Wolff, 1929; Howald, 1930; Dawe, 1963; Garton, 1957, 1972. On divergent notions of character in tragedy and Gill's step "towards a plausible reconciliation", see Thumiger, 2007: 20-6. Thumiger's "own position is composite", 22: she seeks to "transcend the mind /world opposition", 22; tries "to illustrate this balance between individual and world through a number of literary examples . . . the proportions of this balance are a function of *mentality* . . . and of the nature of the single work.", 23. Thumiger works on the premise that there are two components that "work to make a human portrayal in a fiction – two aspects of identity, so to speak. One I will call *psychological depth*, and the other *sense of individuality*.", 23. Her remarks following in which she elaborates on these 'components' are most pertinent. I am interested in the nature and consequences of the spatial *Metaphorik* by which we speak of 'depth' and of the temporal identity of persons (by which we come to see them as unique), how these form two intersecting axes of person and determine our notions of quality of person. I think that persons are always 'fictions', that living, organic mortals are peculiar because they are subject to time in a peculiar way, always still unfolding, always incomplete, until they die, when they are no longer humans, but only matter and a no longer unfolding, static rather than dynamic virtual presence. The depth of persons is a function of their temporal uniqueness and the openness of time, the unforegone alterantive always implicit in its underdetermination.

[177] So called, because it makes as little sense to separate out philosophy, in that categorical way so dear to scholars of all things poetic, as to strain drama to get to its "religious" kernel. It is falsifying, certainly distorting, to analyse out certain qualities and thereby lose the grip on the whole, which is what dramatic poetry seems to encourage us never to lose, i.e. a sense of the identity of knowledge and belief, of justice and goodness, of freedom and service.

only to recall that it is a drama written by a human poet and performed by human actors. The gods have no life independent of their human creators and re-creators. *This* fact is never denied by the Greeks. No priestly class of editors ever takes the culture's poetry in hand, denies that men wrote it and that divine intervention in the historical world accounts for the origin of the work, as in the Hebraic tradition, for example.

Tragedy is itself an instance of humans at their best: deliberating on, interpreting, articulating and thereby extending their understanding of themselves as moral, interpretive, articulative explorers of their predicaments. This *is* their predicament: the predicament of finding life to be a predicament, a problematic situation in which things matter absolutely. The profundity of Dionysus and his theatre, certainly here in the *Bacchae*, inheres in the *problem* that instinct and irrationality represent for humans in their understanding of themselves. The *depth* that humans feel themselves to have through their apprehending of their irrationality, is a depth to which they do not in a servile way surrender. At their best, such as in a Euripides, humans endlessly explore their depths in order to articulate. They thereby open up themselves *as depths*, like the lucid pearl-diver of Pelasgos. They take on dimension, becoming always a little more like that changeable Proteus, the man who always spoke the truth and knew the depths of his world[178].

4.3.9 *Pollai Morphai*

In the formulaic coda affixed to several of Euripides' works[179] and quite aptly concluding the *Bacchae*, we would hear sung a summing up of what was presumably thought, if not by the poet himself then by another interpreter of the play, (for Euripides too was himself interpreter) an interpolator or editor, to be one of the most important lessons of the preceding action, 1388-1391:

> πολλαὶ μορφαὶ τῶν δαιμονίων,
> πολλὰ δ' ἀέλπτως κραίνουσι θεοί·
> καὶ τὰ δοκηθέντ' οὐκ ἐτελέσθη,

[178] Pelasgos: Aesch. *Supp.* 407-411, see § 3.3.8. Proteus: Hom. *Od.* 4. 383-4 speaks the truth, τοιγὰρ ἐγώ τοι, ξεῖνε, μάλ' ἀτρεκέως ἀγορεύσω. / πωλεῖταί τις δεῦρο γέρων ἅλιος νημερτής, knows the depths: ὅς τε θαλάσσης/ πάσης βένθεα οἶδε, 385-6. For another the likening of interpretation to the diving into depths with clear eyes, Diogenes Laertius records an anecdote by which Euripides is said to have given Socrates a copy of the work of Heraclitus, and upon asking the satyr-like father of philosophy what he thought of it, Socrates said that it was excellent, *gennaia*, both the parts he understood and did not, "only, one has to be a Delian diver" to get at it, Diog. Laert. 2.22 φασὶ δ' Εὐριπίδην αὐτῷ δόντα τὸ Ἡρακλείτου σύγγραμμα ἐρέσθαι, "τί δοκεῖ;" τὸν δὲ φάναι, "ἃ μὲν συνῆκα, γενναῖα· οἶμαι δὲ καὶ ἃ μὴ συνῆκα· πλὴν Δηλίου γέ τινος δεῖται κολυμβητοῦ."

[179] *Alcestis*, *Medea, Andromache, Helen*, *Bacchae.*

τῶν δ' ἀδοκήτων πόρον ηὗρε θεός.

Many the shapes of the divine beings,
Many things do gods bring about unforeseen;
And what was expected was not accomplished,
For the unexpected, god found a way.

Pollai morphai tōn daimoniōn: the gods take whatever shape they desire. By contrast, mortals have this one shape, and the indissimulable mortal nature, which Dionysus, as a god, had counterfeited[180]. They only ever clumsily mask and cover themselves, only temporarily and most often too ineffectively conceal themselves and the truth of their nature and identity. They must never count themselves happy or blessed[181], for while they live they can always be "found out" by events, by chance or the equally unpredictable tempers of the gods. Those are truths and theirs are motives that become revealed in Tragedy as in the tragic predicaments of historical life.

Mortals, certainly Athenian mortals, are creatures of *elpis*, (hope, expectation, anticipation)[182]. They are prospective, planning, strategizing, forward-oriented: having *telos*, being *stochastikos*, "skillful in aiming at", "able to hit", "arcum intendentes in"[183]. Gods bring things to pass *krainousi*, and that *aelptōs*, "unanticipated, unplanned for, unlooked for" by mortals. A god finds a *poros* "ford", a way to accomplish what mortals had not conceived, *tōn d'adokētōn*. A mortal, a creature consigned to labour, *mochtos,* and effort, *ponos,* and its only ever temporary relief[184], finds itself *aporos* ("without affordances"), a being of *doxai* "expectations", "assessments", "opinions", "judgements", which prove wrong. Their *doxai* remain "unconsummated", "unrealized", *ouk etelesthē*[185]. Uncertainty and error are as if built into the human mind and its prospective outlook, encoded in its social world. The most impressive, the only availing form of agency in this context is the searching, unfinished interpretation of this unstable context, the making sense of this predicament. This searching,

[180] 54.

[181] On *eudaimōn* (happy or blessed) see § 2.2.1.1 n. 77.

[182] Mortals used to live lives free of trouble and pain, but after Zeus' terrible gift, the *dolos* Pandora, released all manner of "woeful cares" *kēdea lugra;* all that humanity retained was *Elpis,* "anticipation": see Hes. *Erga*. 90-105. On the Athenian disposition from the point of view of a contemporary Athenian (in the words of a hostile Corinthian delegation to Sparta), see Thuc. 1.70-1. On *elpis* as the cure, *pharmakon*, given mortals by Prometheus for having taken from them the knowledge of the day of their deaths, see Aesch. *PD* 248-51. On *elpis* see also § 2.5 n. 249, § 3.1 p. 96 and *elpis* contrasted with *melein* see § 3.3.3 p. 176 n. 170.

[183] *stochastikos*: see Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1141b13, 1106b15.

[184] 278-83, 421-4, 772: τὴν παυσίλυπον ἄμπελον δοῦναι βροτοῖς.

[185] Like the very city of Thebes, which Dionysus finds *ateleston* "uninitiated" i.e. unperfected, uncompleted, because uninducted into his mode of time and being, 40.

interpreting and re-articulating for depth is a task which a work like the *Bacchae* not only reflects and seeks to encourage, but enacts.

4.4 *Barabaroi*: Stranger Talk

Persons are others whom I understand. If you are intelligible you can be a person; if you are a person I expect you are going to be intelligible. If you are as yet unintelligible I may decide you are not a person. I may conclude that you are not an object containing subjectivity, but only an object, at best an instrument for the purposes of actual agents. If you are intelligible, but I insist on not seeing that you may contain a subjectivity not co-extensive with the object of your body, I may be making myself an object, like a thing of diminished reflexivity and itself a lesser subject. Talk constitutes relations and constitutes persons as such. The constitutive character of language – it being not merely designative, it being not simply descriptive distance from reality, but recursive entanglement with experience – is what makes Tragic drama, and poetry generally, profoundly *realistic*[186].

At the opening of the third book of Homer's *Iliad*, a poem on the face of it about the war between Greeks and non-Greeks, there is a memorable and rightly famous description of the onset of the barbarian army, *Il.* 3. 1-9:

> Αὐτὰρ ἐπεὶ κόσμηθεν ἅμ' ἡγεμόνεσσιν ἕκαστοι,
> Τρῶες μὲν κλαγγῇ τ' ἐνοπῇ τ' ἴσαν ὄρνιθες ὡς
> ἠΰτε περ κλαγγὴ γεράνων πέλει οὐρανόθι πρό·
> αἵ τ' ἐπεὶ οὖν χειμῶνα φύγον καὶ ἀθέσφατον ὄμβρον
> κλαγγῇ ταί γε πέτονται ἐπ' ὠκεανοῖο ῥοάων
> ἀνδράσι Πυγμαίοισι φόνον καὶ κῆρα φέρουσαι·
> ἠέριαι δ' ἄρα ταί γε κακὴν ἔριδα προφέρονται.
> οἳ δ' ἄρ' ἴσαν σιγῇ μένεα πνείοντες Ἀχαιοὶ
> ἐν θυμῷ μεμαῶτες ἀλεξέμεν ἀλλήλοισιν.

> Now when the men of both sides were set in order by their leaders,
> the Trojans came on with clamour and shouting, like wildfowl,
> as when the clamour of cranes goes high to the heavens,
> when the cranes escape the winter time and the rains unceasing
> and clamorously wing their way to the streaming Ocean,

[186] On language as constitutive versus designative, see Taylor, 2016.

> bringing to the Pygmaian men bloodshed and destruction:
> At daybreak they bring on the baleful battle against them.
> But the Achaian men went silently, breathing valour,
> stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand by the others.[187]

In war men can kill most unproblematically. When the enemy is flesh and blood, like the animals one slaughters with little pity or regret, when the enemy is a skull to be dashed, knees to loosen, tendons to slice apart, innards to run through, so much bone and flesh and fluid to reduce to the ground, then killing is no dilemma. It may begin to become a dilemma when the barbaric muttering of foreigners comes into focus, not as the squawking of beasts (κλαγγῇ τ' ἐνοπῇ τ' ἴσαν ὄρνιθες ὡς), but as language. Language is the evidence of mind and person. A speaking, intelligible enemy is a difficult kind of thing, one too easily recognizable as like self. By the external conception of theory of mind, language and symbolic exchange is sufficient for the attribution of mind.

The Cyclops, for illustration, is not a non-person, only a very diminished one, a shallow or one-dimensional one; he has language but not self-reflexivity (not being self-aware, he is unaware of double-meanings in language: *outis* "nobody" is a sound attached to his visitor as name, "Nobody", having no other meaning hidden within it). Things are what they seem to him, language is equivalence just as there is no space between his desires and what would be his 'self'. There is as if no internal space, in which he would pause, reflect and examine his desires as if objects. His desires are not objects of his intending mind, they are therefore inarticulable. What of barbarians or primitive savages, who do not speak anything discernible as language but only make sounds like animals – bar-bar-bar or hot-tot-tot?[188] Their sounds are not proof of mind, just as animal calls and shrieks are the sign not necessarily of mind but only of the lower state of *hekousion* and *akousion*, the passive condition that only articulate and prospective humans have transcended.

Women – wailers, singers, at best bird-like chatterers that they are, by the conventional Greek perspective of the time – these do not move in the public world of *agora* and *bouleutēria* but live in the darkened confines of the house with children and servants – the poor and slaves who have no voice: for these the external conception of mind provides only a weakened kind of proof of their personhood. They are not fully in the "public domain"[189].

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[187] Trans. Lattimore, 1967.

[188] The onomatopoeic origins of "Hottentot"; cf. also kwere-kwere-kwere from which "Makwerekwere", the xenophobic designation of non-South African Africans common in South Africa today.

[189] Thuc. 2.45.2.1-5. If Pericles thought the best thing for a woman was to remain unheard, perhaps what he really saying is that the best think for the patriarchal order which privileges men like him is not to be confronted with the personhood of women and the best way to avoid that is not to let the start having the access to the public domain.

They can seem, because they are not permitted to partake fully in the encounters and interactions that constitute the communal life of the *polis*, not to fully possess "the whole panoply of 'mind'". They are peripheral to the 'forms of life' by which the city knows and defines itself. They are in some ways restricted to "a series of inner, private experiences" excluded from and through "language, practices, routines, the rules of the game".

Shall we assume then that foreigners, women, children, slaves (and even animals) are simply not full persons, that they have not agency or, still more significantly, always the *potential* for agentful action and outlook? Certainly that is the assumption that has been made throughout history. A social and political configuration has been taken as evidence of a cognitive and moral deficit. Exclusion has proved that the peripheral ought to be excluded, in the same way that those in power, like Pentheus, feel in their circular way, that being in power, not the possession of any particular quality of mind or awareness, is the sign of its own legitimacy, the complete justification for remaining in power, 504-5: Di. αὐδῶ με μὴ δεῖν, σωφρονῶν οὐ σώφροσιν. /Pe. ἐγὼ δὲ δεῖν γε, κυριώτερος σέθεν.

While the Vietnamese gibber and shriek like wild animals, no doubt the American general will tell us that the Western soldier is a stoic warrior who "breathes valour", an individual who understands collaboration for a higher *telos*. They, the warriors who speak our language and heed our commands, are doubtless "stubbornly minded each in his heart to stand by the others". This may remain so, perhaps, until we see a foreigner as a mourning person, some entity which relates and for whom its relations matter profoundly, whether it be a man in a rice paddy on a screen, the *menschenähnliche* hare whose offspring have been killed and inspire pity in Artemis[190] or a person on a stage in the Theatre of Dionysus. When we see its situation becoming intelligible to us as a predicament, when it cares and forms relations, which matter to it, we have already begun to see an entity or representation as a person and an agent with a mind.

So too in history it has been works like the poetry of Homer that change everything. They may in instances, such as at the opening of *Iliad* 3 be described in non-human terms, but for the rest of the work, the Trojans, an army of mixed foreign peoples, are as human and even more so than some of the ruthless Greeks in their worst moments. To the great and lasting credit of his culture and its civilization (and despite the frankly wrong criticisms of those who discern the roots of Orientalism in Greek culture[191]), Homer's Trojans are persons,

[190] See Aesch. *Ag.* 134-7, see also § 3.1 n. 7.

[191] Saïd, 1977: 55-7. Saïd's influential work *Orientalism*, is very shallow in its reading of Homer, Aeschylus and Euripides *Bacchae*, (whose god, it has escaped his notice, is a Greek god and Theban), see "In *The Bacchae,* perhaps the most Asiatic of all the Attic dramas, Dionysus is explicitly connected with his Asian origins and with the strangely threatening excesses of Oriental mysteries [p.56] . . . The difference

talkers and responders, people whose acts are predicated on intelligible and deliberated motivations. They themselves, the barbarians of Greek poetry – just like the squabbling, competing, counsel-taking and counsel-refusing Greeks – are enmeshed in a web of relations with others. They therefore crucially possess the *potential for agency* and for being evaluated on the terms of that potential agency. Squabbling cranes are neither weak nor strong evaluators – they do not evaluate and thus cannot be judged by the criteria of agency. Homer and Tragedy show non-Greeks and marginal persons as persons having agency, people to whom things matter. They are thoroughly intelligible, except when they are not, but then they are not ethnic types but asocial types, like the Cyclopes[192]. Barbarians, like Greeks, understand and identify themselves – like Pentheus, like Hector in the famous scenes in *Iliad* 6, for just one of countless examples – through their relations. In *Bacchae*, Euripides explores the contents of relations between persons, the social identity, which they take to be so important to their self-understanding. He re-articulates identity, some form having contents.

Euripides' Dionysus – Euripides the poet, who in his career has put such articulate women, such human servants and inhumane gods on stage – is a "woman-shaped" foreigner who brings the threat of enslavement and even bestialization[193]. His foreignness is of course an illusion; he is a Theban son. In his person we discern the falling away of any meaningfulness in the contrast foreign/non-foreign. He travels the cities of the world and a point is made of the fact that, although he has arrived from the East it is an East also where Greeks and non-Greeks share cities, 17-19:

> Ἀσίαν τε πᾶσαν ἣ παρ' ἁλμυρὰν ἅλα
> κεῖται μιγάσιν Ἕλλησι βαρβάροις θ' ὁμοῦ
> πλήρεις ἔχουσα καλλιπυργώτους πόλεις,

separating East from West is symbolized by the sternness with which, at first, Pentheus rejects the hysterical bacchantes. When later he himself becomes a bacchant, he is destroyed not so much for having given in to Dionysus as for having incorrectly assessed Dionysus's menace in the first place.", 56-7. Saïd writes very confidently about "Euripides' intention", "Oriental mysteries", "the rational Western mind" as if uncomplicated, unproblematized matter of the drama. If Greek poetry were as one-dimensional as he assumed, I wonder if it would have the power that it does and invite the diversity of readings it has from readers for so long.

[192] The Cyclopes, Giant and brigand (as in the myths of Theseus and Herakles) form the most obvious antitheses to the human who is *philoxeinos* and to whom there is *nóos theoudēs*. On this theme of the cognitive incompetence that is the mark of the anti-social (Pentheus', the "inhuman one like a blood-stained giant", 543-4, is a permutation of this disorder, a kind of *polis* Polyphemos), see also Hom. *Od.* 9. 146-566, note especially 272-80, for Polyphemos as being both anti-social and uncivilized and also feeling no awe for Zeus (god of *xenia*) and "the other blessed god". In Euripides see the satyr-play *Cyclops*, on which from the perspective of a great expert on Dionysus and *Bacchae* see Seaford, 1984.

[193] *Douleia* – Service: 366, Slavery: 803. *Thēriomorphosis*: 1330-2. Dionysus – a bull, snake, goat, lion – has untamed the women of Thebes; they have been "wilded" having undergone a cognitive *theriomorphosis*.

And all of Asia which lies along the salt sea
Which has fine-towered cities filled
With Greeks and Barbarians mixed together,

He is fanatical about his birthright and his Theban origins. He has come to defend the honour of his mother Semelē[194], yet at the same time he is accompanied by a group of *barbaroi* women and he repeatedly characterizes them as such[195]. The bacchants too, define themselves emphatically in these terms, 1034-5:

εὐάζω ξένα μέλεσι βαρβάροις·
οὐκέτι γὰρ δεσμῶν ὑπὸ φόβωι πτήσσω.

I shout the holy cry, a stranger (*xena*) with *barbarian* songs,
No longer do I cower in fear of bonds (*desmōn*).

These are not merely ornamental attributes – they speak to the fundamental themes of the play, which presents women who have lost all agency, who have lost language and self-awareness; they have been driven out of their minds and out of the city[196]. It presents the losing of mind and therefore of identity, of the king of Thebes. It does so powerfully because it portrays this loss as a process. This process of loss of self is the dramatization of the intimate entanglement of volition and cognition. It presents foreigners as a category of social actor which, from the unhealthy perspective of Pentheus, seems radically different, opaque, the foreigner being not *like self* and yet all too like self. In his first exchange with Dionysus this comes up explicitly, 481-4:

Pe. ἦλθες δὲ πρῶτα δεῦρ' ἄγων τὸν δαίμονα;
Di. πᾶς ἀναχορεύει βαρβάρων τάδ' ὄργια.
Pe. φρονοῦσι γὰρ κάκιον Ἑλλήνων πολύ.
Di. τάδ' εὖ γε μᾶλλον· οἱ νόμοι δὲ διάφοροι.

Pe. Is this the first place you have come with the *daimōn*?
Di. Everyone of the *barbaroi* is dancing these rites.

[194] Note also the tradition of Semelē as foreign goddess, see Dodds: pp. 62-6.

[195] 56-7: θίασος ἐμός, γυναῖκες ἃς ἐκ βαρβάρων / ἐκόμισα παρέδρους καὶ ξυνεμπόρους ἐμοί. 604-5: βάρβαροι γυναῖκες, οὕτως ἐκπεπληγμέναι φόβωι / πρὸς πέδωι πεπτώκατ';

[196] 32-6: τοιγάρ νιν αὐτὰς ἐκ δόμων ὤιστρησ' ἐγὼ/ μανίαις, ὄρος δ' οἰκοῦσι παράκοποι φρενῶν, / σκευήν τ' ἔχειν ἠνάγκασ' ὀργίων ἐμῶν. / καὶ πᾶν τὸ θῆλυ σπέρμα Καδμείων, ὅσαι / γυναῖκες ἦσαν, ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων·

> Pe. Because they have minds (*phronousi*: "think", "are minded") much worse than Greeks'.
> Di. In this at any rate very healthy minds. Beliefs differ.

How ought we to recognize the personhood of those who are peripheral, those who seem incapable of showing that they can participate in the public domain? If we shall not see them as zombies, it will be on the basis of an internal conception of mind. We shall have to assume that all humans are born with minds, that all are, at least potentially, like ourselves. They will then arouse our sympathy and we shall feel for them as we feel for those in our proximity with whom we do share forms of life, or at least as we would feel for ourselves. Yet even closest kin we often fail to recognize as 'like self'; sharing forms of life is no guarantee of healthy mutuality – the endless internecine struggle of the social world surely teaches that lesson again and again. Seeing others as subjects of experience, as having the agency by which we know them *as persons*, will very often require more than an external conception of mind. It will require and reveal a certain quality of evaluation or, in its negative examples, the failure, on the part of protagonists, to articulate and choose.

Acting selfishly, as the Greek kings consistently do, being anti-social and not rising to the potential to strongly evaluate, to act justly and not only egotistically: nothing is more intelligibly human. We are critical of behaviour only when we have first recognized intelligible agency. We do not feel that a Cyclops acts badly: his behaviour, like that of a ravening lion, is simply nature, it happens and is negotiated. One does not appeal to the morality of non-agents. Their deeds are happenings not actions. We feel outraged when agents treat others as if objects, when beings with the capacity for recognition of subjects fail to, or choose not to, apprehend the subjectivity and personhood of others. Humanity, self-reflexivity, agency – these are potentialities in persons. No one is *always* sensitive to the fact of the fullness of personhood of others, not least because the idea that all persons are fully realized, equal and self-reflexive agents is at best an expedient legal fiction. Agency, personhood, humanity – these are qualities on a graduated and shifting spectrum. There are only ever degrees of these. It is precisely the shifting and dwindling character of these properties, their being potentialities and not stable objects and their vagueness, from which source Tragedy partly emanates. Persons must activate themselves ethically, in a sense, and this they typically fail to do. They learn what they ought to have done too late, and *that* is what they all have in common.

4.5 *Polis as Palē*: "The struggles you must face await you"[197]

The *polis* is *palē*, a wrestling. Social life is a kind of grappling, an ongoing contest: tussling with unmanageable others[198]. Nevertheless, the *polis* and its *nomoi* can serve to normalize and circumscribe tensions in the need to neutralize them and the threats to its equilibrium. Disequilibrium, in Greek history, is the constant and irrepressible danger to the social and political order. Athens in the 5th Century is unlike almost all cultures everywhere and throughout time in the originality with which it expressed the tensions running between conservatism and the embrace of the new. The democratic, imperial city's notion of itself, its desires and intentions and strategies, were contestable and vigorously contested. The most fundamental values and concepts of governance were still disputed, as we read in Thucydides, Herodotus and Plato. Tragic drama evokes a world where the most profound questions were up for discussion and the values that underpinned them were not matters that were deemed settled at all. Personal clashes on the Attic stage became pretexts or precipitants of the radical appraisal of meaning and value as such.

The unwillingness to receive Dionysus has been the failure to receive also the transmitted traditions of earlier generations, the inherited customs cherished by "the ordinary folk": *patrioi paradochai*, *nomoi*; as the bacchants sing: τὸ πλῆθος ὅτι τὸ φαυλότερον ἐνόμισε χρῆ-/ταί τε, τόδ' ἂν δεχοίμαν, 430-1[199]. The challenge of the integration of the new and the foreign is knit with the problem of the institutionalization of the practices of the *volk*; of the educative challenge of inducting the young into the timeless ancient wisdom of the culture; and of the preservation of established knowledge by its successful transmission. *Bacchae* is a kind of music played on the tense cords stretched between several *antipaloi*: younger and older generations; common knowledge and individual, tragic ignorance; self-assertion and

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[197] 963-4: μόνος σὺ πόλεως τῆσδ' ὑπερκάμνεις, μόνος·/ τοιγάρ σ' ἀγῶνες ἀναμένουσιν οὓς ἐχρῆν.

[198] 800-1: ἀπόρωι γε τῶιδε συμπεπλέγμεθα ξένωι,/ ὃς οὔτε πάσχων οὔτε δρῶν σιγήσεται. For these lines see p. 92 n. 206 and p. 125.

[199] See pp. 123-4 for translation of these lines. Cf. μάλιστα γάρ νιν δήξομαι δράσας τάδε, 351, where Pentheus is threatening to make his own display, by desecrating the seer's seat of auspicy, a threat of blasphemous outrage against the respected traditions and honoured practices. Even without an official priestly class the Greeks often manifest scepticism and the marked anti-clericalism of later historical periods of Reformation and Enlightenment. See also 200-3 see 161. Mikalson, 1991. On *nomoi* see also the lines at 894-9, discussed at § 3.3 p. 175-80 and n. 186, § 4.3 n. 101, § 5.5.3 n. 130. This 'seat of auspicy' is mentioned by Pausanias at 9.16. 1.8-2.1 Θηβαίοις δὲ μετὰ τοῦ Ἄμμωνος τὸ ἱερὸν οἰωνοσκοπεῖόν τε Τειρεσίου καλούμενον καὶ πλησίον Τύχης ἐστὶν ἱερόν. Like the lightning-blasted *thalamos* of Semelē it was shown to visitors to Thebes as a famous sight, it is mentioned also at Soph. *Ant.* 999. It provides an instance of the dialectical relationship between poetry and tradition. Just as the roles of the maenads who travelled to Magnesia to bring their *orgia* may very well have been shaped by Euripides' imagining of maenads in *Bacchae* (his in turn, of course, informed by cult practices as well as earlier poets like Aeschylus), – see Henrichs, 1978 – so is it unclear in the case of the sights at Thebes, whether the 'infrastructure' of real, material sites shaped the 'superstructure' of Tragedy, vice versa or in a complex way they served to dialectically underwrite one another, over time. Thus Dodds wrote of Teiresias' Seat in his comments on 347 " . . . one of the 'sights' shown to tourists at Thebes . . . Hence perhaps mention of it here and Soph. *Ant.* 999 – *unless it was these passages which stimulated the Theban guides to 'discover' it.*", my italics. Cf. also Porres Caballero's "Maenadic Ecstacy in Greece: Fact or Fiction?" in Bernabé: 159-84.

esprit de corps; traditional receptiveness and innovative refutation; transmitted wisdom and empirical knowledge; the local and the foreign; the timeless and the historical; exclusion and participation; bacchic joyfulness and political woefulness, *penthos*. It is a *Paradebeispiel* then, of the tensions inherent in human culture and culture's constant challenge to integrate the vigorous, destructive forces of youth and its *vitality*, with the preservative, abstracting intentions of age, viz. with *transcendence*.[200]

Drama imitates this complex situation of fundamental tensions and of actors "entangled" with each other, competitively, deceivingly and even unwittingly: their acts and the acts of others constituting a dynamic causal milieu, a precipitative context. This social world of interactions is one for which Euripides finds the metaphor of wrestling useful. Social agents read one another's moves and seek to get a hold of each other and evade being captured and pinned down. The figures of *Bacchae* escape one another, captivate and elude; they *face* and deface each other; they use language to both illuminate and darken their meanings and intentions. Their slipperiness and desire to dominate is a dramatically enhanced and rhetorically exaggerated, kinetic portrait of just the kind of interactions which constitute the social world of persons. The work is thoroughly realistic in this sense and its power derives from its intelligibility to social actors who will recognize its situations.

We ought not to overstate the uncertainty and ignorance that I have said "adumbrates" social encounters. It ought, at least, to be said that much of the time people do have an idea of what is going on in one another's minds – that is the basis of communication; people anticpate what the other means and intends them to know (and usually also what the other means to do). It is only that there is always a degree of uncertainty and this is highly significant: it has been a most consequential factor for humans in their social contexts and a great resource for dramatic poets. I do not know what it is like to be a bat. Perhaps I can never know and although I think I can know exactly what a person would or should feel in a given situation, and although much depends on a kind of routinized and diffuse empathy in the social world, I should remain aware that my social fellows can be not only troublingly angular but apparently even too round, very slippery. It is hard to find a purchase in the wrestling with social fellows, no "docile fellahin".

Perhaps in retrospect it will seem to have been natural for readers of *Bacchae* and students of Greek Religion in the early 21st Century to have been peculiarly alert to the cognitive and social aspects of the world it represents. Ours is a time in which the technological prostheses for the mind and its social engagement are becoming ever more invasive and effective in re-

[200] On *vitality* and *transcendence*, see Bloch, 1991.

shaping (and manifesting anew) our forms of life. Humans develop ever newer, ever more intensified means of externalizing themselves and internalizing the perspectives, the intentions, minds and meanings and the virtual presence of others. This however is an intensification, a quantitative not qualitative modification, of the perennial human activity of communication, exchange, engagement and self-presentation. It does not represent a crisis for "naturalness", for humans may never have been "natural", if by that we mean somehow safe from the abstracting, "virtualizing", and cognitive nature (the *physis andros*, "man's nature", one may say, adopted by Dionysus to go with the assumed *morphē brotesia*, "mortal form"), which defines the human[201].

4.6 The *Lebenswelt* of Agents

Κρύψαντες γὰρ ἔχουσι θεοὶ βίον ἀνθρώποισιν.[202]

Using *Bacchae* as a sample, we may take a small step in the direction of an anthropology of Greek Tragedy with fresh inflections. I have set out from the premise that humans ought not to be studied as "objects among other objects". Significance, value and meaning are fundamental to human persons who, crucially, understand themselves as subjects and deliberate upon their subjectivity, and for whom this deliberation does shape their motivation and, recursively in turn, their subjectivity. Humans are reflexive and perpetually interpretive and this is just the sense of them we find expressed and enacted in the Attic Theatre. They act as *knowledgeable* agents,[203] initiating and selecting or failing to select which of their desires shall be their effective desires, the ones they ultimately act upon[204].

These self-aware and mutually aware protagonists understand themselves as constituting a sequence of generations, a sensual, phenomenal *Lebenswelt* marked by tensions, change and continuity. In this life-world, their day-to-day existences are lived out amongst co-present social actors in a context that is typically ultra-social but also imperilled by the anti-social impulses and acts of individuals in what is something like an unclosed, social ecosystem of agents, in which a certain measure of disequilibrium is always on the horizon. By *Lebenswelt* I mean the context constituted of humans in time, a common order generated by commonly perceived phenomena: the basic fact of human intersubjectivity; life as always common life with common objects of perception and intention.

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[201] Contrast the concerned perspective of Burkert in the face of increasingly pervasive digital technology, Burkert, 1996: 177-9.

[202] Hes. *Erga* 42: "For the gods keep life concealed from human beings."

[203] See § 4.2 n. 69, for Giddens, 1984: 26.

[204] Cf. §3.2.2.

A *polis* is a temporally extended ("stretched" in Giddens' phrase) *Lebenswelt* of generations and their time-bound perspectives coming into being, mingling and dying away. This is the sequence of "predecessors", "contemporaries", "successors", any of whom at any given time may or may not also be "co-present"[205]. The *polis* is fundamentally a scene of complex co-presence; the international and cosmopolitan *polis* like Athens in the 5th Century includes in its *Imaginaire* and in intermittent co-present contact, a much wider world of contemporaries too. The solipsistic Cyclops, Polyphemos, enjoys no *symposia* (and is thus additionally vulnerable to wine), he lives in an atomized world of rare co-presence and an apparently minimal concern with a world of persons beyond itself either spatially (contemporaries) or temporally (predecessors and successors).

As in ordinary conversation and daily life in human contexts, the protagonists of Greek drama are ever seeking clarity, *saphes*, verification, *basanizein*, *bebaioun* and that which is sure, *asphaleia*, through forms of *elegchos*. The *piston* and *alēthes* are often denied to them and this denial, the difficulty of securing truth and justification, is one of the most fundamental features of human common life, viz. the uncertainty or darkness of things, *adēlotes*. In the dark, one is liable to be laid low, to trip up, it is *sphaleros* and yet also, full of divine mystery, σεμνότητ' ἔχει σκότος, 486. It is the god who sees in the dark by an uncanny fire and the god through whom humans begin to discern differently. Perhaps, Pentheus himself expresses this inadvertently, when he says scornfully that the Stranger locked up in the stalls may "gaze on shadowy darkness", ὡς ἂν σκότιον εἰσορᾶι κνέφας, 510[206].

Humans are beings for whom judgement and the establishment of value forms not a peripheral but a central problem, a persistent and never consummated project integral to their understanding of themselves. Humans are not definingly rational but as Charles

[205] *Lebenswelt:* A notion with many cognate conceptualizations such as in Heidegger (Sein), Bourdieu (l'habitus) and Castoriadis (l'imaginaire). It derives from the recognition that there is no "objective" reality and yet there is a shared experience of life amongst diverse subjects which has the character of the "objective". See Edmund Husserl: *Die Lebenswelt* in *Gesammelte Werke Band XXXIX 1916-37*; developed in Merleau-Ponty, 1945; and in sociology, in a manner that would be influential for thinkers like Anthony Giddens, by Alfred Schutz, 1967: *The Phenomenology of the Social World* and Schutz, 1932. The *polis,* as I see it, is the knitting together of perspectives and persons into a common, objective order. It is a context of "joint attention" (see Tomasello, 2000) and Theatre is a special context of intensified joint attention, a space privileged for heightened co-presence, as it were. See also Bloch, 1992 on the "political" function of ritual to integrate predecessors and successors and generate "objectivity". Dionysus is the god who knits together individual minds with their solipsistic tendencies, integrating many perspectives. The consequence of this (to call it 'function' might imply that the need arose first and the theatre answers the need, but I suspect that theatre arose out of something like the playfulness that comes naturally to singing, dancing, acting humans) is that he becomes recognized, certainly by Euripides, as the god of the broken mind and the healthy mind, the god through whom the *polis* can become unanimous, which is to say a person. Cf. "our predecessors' traditions, coeval with time, which we have come town", πατρίους παραδοχάς, ἅς θ' ὁμήλικας χρόνωι/ κεκτήμεθ', 201-2.

[206] Dionysus had already hinted to the unreceptive Pentheus that the god has and imparts *night vision*, 469-70: Pe. πότερα δὲ νύκτωρ σ' ἢ κατ' ὄμμ' ἠνάγκασεν;/ Di. ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα, καὶ δίδωσιν ὄργια.

Taylor puts it, are "interpreting animals", and agents to whom things *matter*. By what light or fire will humans ever illuminate what matters most to them, the nature of their own lives as ephemeral persons and the inaccessible, shadowy minds of the divine persons? This "mattering" and its articulation is at the very heart of Tragedy and tellingly, Dionysus is a god born of fire and accompanied always by bright torches in the night.

Humans strategize for unpredictability. The mind has a falsifiability and plasticity, a concealability which represents a fundamental problem for social actors. The body of Pentheus is poorly concealed and its unrestoreability once it has been deformed is grotesquely realized. Human social actors have minds, as gods do. But human minds, by contrast, inhabit and constitute a social world of great complexity and an existence, which by its nature necessitates a constant attention and striving for right judgements. Because of their non-privileged perspective in a face-to-face environment rather than remote, surveying perspective (*kataskopon*, πόρσω /γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον-/τες 392-4), humans in drama are constantly assessing and testing and verifying.

Tragedy by no means presents a typical scene of life or average situations. Its predicaments are the intensified moments of crisis in which ethical contours and character become heightened and sharply delineated. The mortal predicament, as depicted in Tragedy, is to be insecure but also to judge and seek to identify value and meaning. They cannot, like Oedipus, leave it at that, terminally uncertain, they must know. In such a situation the disguise, the mask, the unreadable face and dissembled motive become powerfully invested epitomes of the broad and pervasive challenges of human existence. Drama imitates an always thoroughly social world constituted of many diverse perspectives radically subject to time and change, and subject to constant, mutual monitoring and (when persons are strong and original evaluators of their cultures, traditions and identities) to constant re-evaluation of self.

How Dionysus was born, is a fundamental question in *Bacchae* – what ignited him, engendered his identity, what spark does he have dancing in him? Was he conceived by the divine seed of Zeus' fire, or was he the product of a purely organic process and the animal lust of a girl who herself could not have had relations with divinity; who had only the low cunning and the appetites that also animals have? In *Bacchae* mortals have been asked to have an internal conception of Dionysus' divine mind, to infer not only from the familiar, from one's own local perspectives on people and motives, from what is intelligible simply because it is in the public domain. Dionysus is a god of common, public festivals and of ineffable, private mystery-cults. Both aspects are presented in *Bacchae* at the Great Dionysia in 405 BCE. Equally, Dionysus manifests the different conceptions of agency and its

inference: internal or external. The god who is both local-born and foreign, both historical and divine, straddles the iambic mode of human *homilia* – intercourse, agora, talk – and the lyric, bacchic mode of choral song with its special knowledge and privileged purview over time and human doings.

4.7 Summary

This chapter has further developed the themes of agency, evaluation, judgement and the nature of persons as self-reflexive subjects introduced in chapters 2 and 3. It also stands as a bridge between the first part of this study, focused on agency as an ethical bearing and articulacy, and the second part, which takes up the themes of the social character of agency and persons. Agency, from the ethical perspective, is a potentiality of persons to be strong evaluators, to assess their desires or know themselves. From the point of view of Gell's anthropology of art or Guthrie's thesis for the motivating of belief in super-natural persons, agency is a quality of mind possessed by actors and inferred in different ways.

Bacchae is a work in which questions of evaluation and judgement and the identification of persons form the central problems. An anthropology of Greek Tragedy must be an anthropology of subjects and agents. Subjectivity and agency form the principal concerns of Tragedy, as is patent in this particular work in which the god of Tragedy plays a central role. *Bacchae* does not solve problems so much as productively problematize the familiar. Human identity and the identity of values – the self and self-interest – are at issue and at stake. Knowing what to wish for and how to wish for it, and what to judge valuable, is inextricable from the problem of understanding one's own motives, identifying the quality of personhood in one's social others, and recognizing the nature, meaning and real claims of divine persons.

Human existence is indeterminate – now underdetermined, now overdetermined – and always coming into being, *aei epigignomena*. Consciously and unconsciously, routinely and habitually, humans are interpreters of those in their midst. Most of human life is not spent pondering. Tragic drama is an exceptional moment of intensified scenes of crises in solidarity and crises of values. They are moments of historical pause for discursive perspective-taking on the nature of desires and identity ordinarily – outside of Dionysus' affecting presence or perhaps of philosophical talk and inspiration, *mania* – taken for granted. Human protagonists consistently see and treat others as objects: indifferently, as instruments of their own purposes, or as purely passive things, objects denied personhood. Alternatively they may recognize others as *like self*, subjects having outlooks, concern and an

intelligible emotional responsiveness, which inspires sympathy and pity. Human actors ascribe or "theorize" mind in other social actors. This ascribing can be suspended, that itself entails an original or at least prior, and usually unreflective, value judgement. Mind is a quality alternatively treated as, by the internal conception of *theory-of-mind*, innate in other persons or, by the external conception of mind, as evident from their social and cultural competence, proof of mind through competence.

How and what we infer about the character of various classes of social others is determining for the quality of relations possible between persons, and thus for the character of and possibilities for social life. Human beings are intensely and definitively social. They are also susceptible to an anti-social egotism. Common life is marked by tensions that need continuous care, notably that between intense sociality and a susceptibility to anti-social behaviour, between the collaborative and competitive instinct. Group life is imperilled always by a crisis of solidarity. *Bacchae*, as Tragedy typically does, presents an episode that in a heightened way expresses the tensions by which the *polis* is riven and a certain powerful facet of the crisis of solidarity, that between kin and that between mortals and immortals. Euripides' play makes manifest ordinarily latent problems and dangers.

In negotiating co-presence and the antagonism and competition of group life, actors are seen to strategize, to dissemble and to enchant in order to achieve their desired objectives. Decrypting intentions is a problem or challenge cognate with decrypting intentional identity, viz. detecting agency. The social problem represented by other mortal persons is transposed onto the philosophical and theological problem of recognizing and knowing the desires and intentions of divine persons in *Bacchae*. Dionysus has come to defend – *apologēsasthai* 41 – his mother's reputation and simultaneously reclaim his divine identity, 22: ἵν' εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς. Her relationship with god has been denied: Dionysus has come to assert the historical truth of a relation and the timeless truth of his divine identity. In Euripides' vision, the politick acceptance of Dionysus is insufficient. Quality of bearing and authenticity of desire have a central, thematic value. Whatever the nature of Dionysus' motivations, there is an important lesson about the quality of human motivation too.

Knowing others – divine and mortal – is inherently difficult. Knowing oneself –a special category of social other – is similarly perilous. Dionysus takes different shapes and shifts form, *morphē*; he is outstandingly hard to identify. He raises, with great force, the problem of the identification and location of personhood. Social life is in fact always overshadowed by ignorance. Knowledge is not a steady beam of light but more like light and shadow thrown by the dance of a fiery torch. Securing stable knowledge, verification and authentication are difficult, as much due to the peculiar structure of persons as to the indeterminacy of things:

personal motivation is concealable and concealed even from subjects themselves. Humans are enmeshed in complex relations with unknown or only ever partially known persons. Gods are extreme exemplars of this social reality: taking any form they wish, their intentions and perspectives are terminally opaque to humans.

Strangers are not as they seem. Persons taken as easily understandable are revealed to be the most uncanny kinds of being in *Bacchae*. The familiar is defamiliarized. The strange is introduced into the midst of the ordinary world of the *polis* and its interactions. The *polis* is a scene of competition and mutual vigilance, a comic and tragic scene of mutual misunderstanding, of the overestimation of self and the misprision of the contents of others. The play is an imitation of a place in time: the city is a *Lebenswelt*, having all the tensions and characteristics – to an artistically enhanced degree – of the social world of persons. Knowledge is a problem, integrating the new is a challenge and productively uniting opposite domains of life and resolving fundamental tensions, a constant task requiring, paradoxically, not only vigilance but the Dionysiac release from normal orders of feeling and relating.

5

Ou raidion zētēma: Abducting Dionysus

οὐ ῥάιδιον ζήτημα[1]

5.1 Introduction

It is inherently difficult recognizing that others are persons and *a fortiori* determining what quality of person they possess. This is a theme in Euripides' work, expressed, for example by Orestes, aporetic in the first episode of Euripides' *Electra*, where he poses himself a very Euripidean question [πῶς οὖν τις αὐτὰ διαλαβὼν ὀρθῶς κρινεῖ;][2] "How then does one rightly distinguish good and bad men?", Eur. *El.* 366-68:

> φεῦ·
> οὐκ ἔστ' ἀκριβὲς οὐδὲν εἰς εὐανδρίαν·
> ἔχουσι γὰρ ταραγμὸν αἱ φύσεις βροτῶν.
>
> Pheu.
> There is nothing exact [*akribes*] when it comes to virtue [*euandria*].
> For the natures of mortals contain disorder [*taragmon*: disquiet, trouble].

Cognate with this problem is that of how we ought to know things that we do not already know. How are we to know objects of knowledge that require special, or as yet unacquired, ways of knowing? There are different qualities of mind and so are there different kinds of knowledge. This is made abundantly clear to the spectator of *Bacchae*. The prominence of the theme of knowledge and its problematization in the play has been remarked on and discussed by many of the commentators: knowledge is at issue with the epiphanic god[3].

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[1] "Not something easily found", 1139. Cf. also Kadmos' further references to the ruined body of Pentheus *diasparaktos*, 1220 "torn to pieces", 1218-19: οὗ σῶμα μοχθῶν μυρίοις ζητήμασιν / φέρω τόδ' "whose body here, in a thousand pieces, I am carrying with great pain"; and 1299: ἐγὼ μόλις νιν ἐξερευνήσας φέρω. "With difficulty I searched out [his body] and bring it".

[2] Eur. *El.* 373. Note that this line (and 373-79) was deleted by Wilamowitz as a later interpolation, Diggle and other editors do retain this passage.

[3] Dionysus' mission is an epistemic one, he has come to Thebes and travels the world of mortals "in order that he be known". Conacher, 1967: 73-7 "Appendix: A Note on *sophos, to sophon, sophia, to phronein* and *nomos* in the *Bacchae*". Leinieks, 1996: "Perception" 217-242, "Wisdom" 257-76; Reynolds-Warnhoff, 1997; Radke, 2003: 154-202 on "Die Abstraktheit der 'dionysischen Weisheiten' des Chores". A good recent discussion of the epiphanic character of Dionysus' identity (and thus of his being a phenomenon crucial to which is the

There is little need here to spell out again in close detail the theme of knowledge and the varied terminology used by the poet in *Bacchae*, in our effort to come at that complicated, hard-to-define quality. It may not be remiss only to point out that as well as kinds of knowledge, sources and seats of knowledge, references to sleep, inebriation, enthusiasm, frantic helplessness, panic, frenzy and *mania* are proliferate. The passing into and out of these conditions is also vividly narrated and even twice enacted onstage[4]. Much in the work serves to develop a highly differentiated picture of consciousness, its absence and retrieval. The mind is an elliptical thing around Dionysus; it moves in an orbit – caught between equally strong centripetal and centrifugal impulses. It is an orbit whose centre is nowhere, its circumference everywhere. It contracts and expands and when it is brightest day the mind can also be nearest its nadir, just as in the deepest dark it can be most uncannily illuminated.

An intentional stance, an intentional posture, a present absence, an absent presence, a quality, a property, constituted of language, immaterial, an orbit, gravity and entropy – we use all kinds of metaphors to try to express what Euripides in his poetic work is handling – the essential and mysterious constituent of persons as agents. If person and mind is such a protean property, so hard to locate – οὐ ῥάιδιον ζήτημα, μόλις ἐξερευνήσας – so opaque, so unclear as to its identity, how are persons to detect minds? On what evidence do we infer the given quality of intentionality? How, especially, do we secure the knowledge of the extraordinary and the extraordinary beings which are gods? How ought mortals to recognize divine minds? If they are ready to attribute mind, how will they further identify and qualify those minds or forms of agency? In this chapter we study the kinds of inference that it seems mortals are expected to rely upon in securing the precious quality of knowledge and recognition, which the vengeful Dionysus comes amongst humans, disguised, to make them learn, whether or not they wish to, *kei mē thelei*[5].

A defining feature of the human intentional posture is its transience and spectral character. The mind of mortals, their personhood, the immaterial part of themselves that matters so much to them that they consider it to be the necessary element of their identity seems to pass

problem of knowledge, the apprehending and integration of the different, the new or the strange) is Henrichs in Schlesier, 105-16: "Göttliche Präsenz als Differenz: Dionysos als epiphanischer Gott" and Thumiger, 2007: 107-121 on sight, the visible, invisible and epiphany. On the fundamental problem (and opportunity) that knowledge represents for religious ritual and belief, see Larson, 2016: esp. 66-126 and Burkert, 1996: 156-76. Knowledge and methods of verifiability, of securing the *piston* "true, certain, credible" and an ultimate guarantor for belief presents a fundamental, existential problem of *homo religiosus*.

[4] 683-94, 1233-1300.

[5] 39: δεῖ γὰρ πόλιν τήνδ' ἐκμαθεῖν, κεἰ μὴ θέλει.

away, at least out of the historical *durée*, out of the accessible mortal world[6]. Mind, even in historical life with all its empirical opportunities, is a thing not easy to locate, something both there and often not there. It is a flickering, fluttery kind of property. Consciousness moves on a spectrum which is almost circular. It moves like a planet through phases of brightness and darkness, being radically subject to time and rhythm.

The mind evaporates in contact with wine, and with Dionysus, but not entirely; and only slowly or partially. If it 'passes out' it will pass back in to "itself". It dissipates and reassembles itself on a daily basis when undone in sleep, which is also often seen, through dreams, as something like a state of amplified mental power. Dreams have always been regarded not only as not properly corresponding to reality ('That Joseph, he is just a dreamer') but as corresponding more deeply to a reality which is not entirely apparent ('Joseph is an inspired prophet and interpreter'). Mind and therefore agency is not either "there" or "not there". Prophetic inspiration entails the disappearance of consciousness and the re-appearance in a much stronger, heightened form, of a special kind of knowledgeability. The same is true of poetic and telestic inspiration and even in some sense true of erotic *mania*, the effect of which may seem to be an effacement of self, but which is also connected with a deepening of awareness, a transformation of the ordinary, a special kind of knowledge we may justly call sensibility.

The mind may be said, like the body, to go on four legs, two and then three[7]. Budding, birth, blossoming, maturity and decline: all these phases or events are present or evoked in *Bacchae*. From infancy (having no language); through adolescence (being a chatterer); to the real potential for self-control of adulthood (the epitome of this self-control and this estate, in its authentic rather than Penthean form, is the rhetorical master, who was Odysseus); and the increasing incontinence of senescence (think, for instance, of the flow of Nestor's conversation and the view of Kadmos taken by Pentheus). The mind, with the body, has its phases and rhythms. It has its span and its parameters. Mortals fantasize that it survives the death of the body (as a city survives the passing away of its generations), but the mind is always determined and defined by mortality. Like everything, its character is shaped by its radical subjection to temporality. Mortality is the primary condition of human identity. In Tragedy mortality is definitive, *the* human identity: *thanatos*.

[6] So that the disembodied shades of the Underworld in Homer "are" still the persons identified and identifying themselves as Elpenor, Achilles, Agamemnon, Antikleia, Ajax, etc.

[7] The contents of the riddle are not mentioned in the most famous Oedipus play, but see the fragments of Euripides' own *Oedipus*, fr. 540a: P. Oxy. 2459 fr. 2 [ed.] E. Turner, 1962.

Tragedy has naturally been "read" more than it has been experienced, since the custodians of tragedy have been readers, philologists. Simon Goldhill's subtle *Reading Greek Tragedy*[8], is one outstanding example of the application to Tragedy of a modified semiotic approach, taking Tragedy as text and text as system of signs. Yet Tragedy will be more appropriately understood in the same way we ought to understand social life, through an anthropology of persons in constant and complicated encounters with one another (and others include also that unruly other that one projects and calls oneself and those "unmanageable" projected beings called gods). Tragedy, rather than semiotic system, to which we might apply a grammar of rules, ought to be seen as a social "ecosystem", in time as organic beings are in time, not only a text but a kind of installation or mimetic re-instituting of *Lebenswelt*.

Dionysus, famously, seems to collapse difference. Young and eternal; immortal son of a dead mother; present and absent; bright and dark; powerful and a victim; bringing madness and health and so on. Does he vitiate ordinary semiosis? Does he transcend it – is he the polysemic, *polyonomos* – having many names[9] – deity of semiotic superabundance? *Iphigenia at Aulis*, *Alcmeon at Corinth* and *Bacchae*, on a Spring day in 405 BCE, enacted, as the primary concern, the eternal crisis of solidarity between people most proximate to one another – family – and even the crisis of *solidarity with oneself.* Drama itself fuses the eternal perspective of *langue* with the particular instance of *parole*, reveals the recursive unity or terminal entanglement of "paradigm" and "syntagm", *Zeit* and *Sein*. The subject, the matter of these works are: relations with others, human and divine; psychological and cognitive bonds; affective and political connections between persons. The Euripidean human is *homo sapiens sapiens*, *ignorans*, *religious* and *anthrōpos homilios*: beings by turn ultra-social and anti-social.

With Dionysus there is something anterior to language and signs, that mortals ought to have had, something like faith, the right affective bearing, the healthy orientation towards others and their likewise time-bound selves. Signs can fail, or more precisely, interpretations fail. Semelē's sisters were poor exegetes, incapable of divining an unfamiliar pattern – divine mingling with human – that was strange, unfamiliar or unanticipated, one that human *elpis*

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[8] Goldhill, 1986. Another fine example is Zeitlin, 1982 a semiotic study of Aeschylus' *Seven Against Thebes*.

[9] *Poluonomos:* see Soph. *Antig.* 1115-7: Πολυώνυμε, Καδμείας νύμφας ἄγαλμα/ καὶ Διὸς βαρυβρεμέτα/ γένος,. Note that this designation is also given other gods, and should not be taken as too decisive evidence of a polymorphism peculiar to Dionysus. It, for example, is used of Artemis at Ar. *Thesm.* 320 and of Aphrodite at Theoc. *Id.* 15. 109. In Plato *hubris*, so much the subject of the theatre of Dionysos Poluōnomos, is called *poluōnomos*, having many names (Pl. Phdr 238a 2-5: ὕβρις δὲ δὴ πολυώνυμον – πολυμελὲς γὰρ καὶ πολυμερές – καὶ τούτων τῶν ἰδεῶν ἐκπρεπὴς ἥ ἂν τύχῃ γενομένη, τὴν αὑτῆς ἐπωνυμίαν ὀνομαζόμενον τὸν ἔχοντα παρέχεται.) and like Dionysus too having "many parts": *polumeles*, *polumeres*. On the unity and multiplicity of Dionysus see Versnel's "*Heis Dionysos!* – One Dionysos? A Polytheistic Perspective" in Schlesier: 23-46; Ford's "Dionysus' many names in Aristophanes' Frogs", Schlesier: 343-55; Henrichs, 2013: 554-82; Encinas Reguero 2013: 349-65 "The names of Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae* and the rhetorical language of Teiresias"; Gasparro, 2013.

could not have planned for. Persuasion does not avail. Reason can be explained away. Force cannot win over those who are not *ready* or *amenable* in a prior way to know. What kind of inference is necessary with Dionysus, what kind of handling will suffice? In this chapter I argue that reading, deduction, induction, persuasion have not served well in *Bacchae*. What is called for, it is suggested, is a different, inspired, form of inference, of coming into knowledge – one prior to established semiotic, conventions, *nomoi* or usages.

5.2.1 Art's Agents

"Welcome the god into the country, pour libations for him, be a bacchant, wreathe your head", Teiresias admonishes the young *tyrannos,* Pentheus[10]. Embrace the Stranger and his god, Dionysus, he is saying, and by extension take – *dechou* – his gifts, everything he promises and signifies. Take the god's postures and have his *skeuē*, the *indexes* – agentful objects, artefacts[11] – by which you become invested with the god's own agency. That is what the other protagonists all advise the king. To Pentheus, however, Dionysiac religion is *mere* anthropomorphism, a sham, a pretext – *prophasis* – for very ordinary vice. It dresses up human nature as divine, it describes divinity with the human ethical profile[12]. He thinks he detects, behind Dionysiac devotional community, only ordinary, human motivations: opportunity for sexual license, debauchery and otiose truancy amongst the women of Thebes; seduction and charlatanism in the Stranger; and the venality of the religious expert in Teiresias[13]. The Stranger, god in mortal form, is a mere "*goēs*", a cheat, an illusionist (also a wizard or religious expert in mediating between this world and that of the dead[14]). From his effects on the city, on its women and old men, Pentheus infers a certain quality of human intention, a commonly intelligible agency when he should *"abduct"* divine agency, 311-13[15].

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[10] 312-13, see § 2.6 p. 118 above for text and translation of 309-13.

[11] See below § 5.2.3-4 on *index* and *abduction* and *agency* in the Gellian sense in which I employ these terms.

[12] 224.

[13] The seer and priest as venal charlatan is a trope of Greek poetry. Most relevant for this discussion is to point out the identical aspersions cast on the seer figure Teiresias in *Ba.* and Chrysēs in *IA*. The point is not to register the trope, but to emphasize the meaning of its recurrence. The *Lebenswelt* of Tragedy is a "causative milieu", a "precipitative context" in which social actors constantly, reflexively seek to identify the actual motive or cause behind the claims and acts of their fellow social actors. This is a context of perpetual mutual regard and interpretation, misinterpretation, communication, clarification and unpenetrated obscurities. The Tragic stage, like the household and the agora, is a scene of constant interpretation. On Teiresias in *Bacchae*, see Gallistl, 1979, Roth, 1984 and Verdenius, 1988; on the figure of the seer in Ancient Greece, see Flower, 2008.

[14] 234: γόης ἐπωιδὸς Λυδίας ἀπὸ χθονός. On the *goēs* (magician but also expert on the dead and intermediary between the world of the living and the dead) in Antiquity, see Iles-Johnson, 1999: 82-126.

[15] See § 2.6 p. 118 above for text and translation.

5.2.2 A Causal Milieu

Alfred Gell's anthropology of art and his conceptualization of the "art object" as *index* will be fruitfully deployed in reflecting on and theorizing agency in the world of Dionysus, that is, of *Bacchae* but also of Greek Tragedy more broadly, that transformation of the *Lebenswelt* of the Athenians. Art works exist only in a relational context; they are activated by and recursively activate relations in turn. Gell unpacks the social character of agency in his development of a theory about the relations between artists or craftspeople, "works of art" and those who experience those works[16].

Human life, as Gell puts it, is formed of a *texture of social relations*[17]. Social relations are to be understood on the basis of an inter-subjectivity in which subjects consider their fellows as intelligible – they impute intention to them and a mind within. Humans are inveterate theorizers, ascribing to others, by the logic of the Theory of Mind, the mind through which all of their own experience appears to come to them. In other words, subjects in the social world impute the agency, the capacity to relate, interpret and anticipate, which they feel that they themselves possess.

Agency is an intellectual or cognitive faculty – in fact the matrix of all faculties and their perception and anticipation in others – for remembering and projecting. It is that capacity by which a person thinks of itself as causing events and being enmeshed in a world of often similarly intended, initiated and *caused effects* – what Gell calls the *causal milieu*. In a cognate way one commentator on Tragedy has written of its world of expressed causation as a "precipitative context"[18].

5.2.3 Index

Gell wishes to replace the terms "art work" or "art object" (and all their irrelevant baggage, to do with questions of social practice and prestige, which are not his focus of study) with the term *index*, which he borrows from American Pragmatist philosophy and its more recent re-articulation in the semiotic theory of Eco:

> I propose that 'art-like' situations can be discriminated as those in which the material 'index' (the visible, physical, 'thing') permits a particular cognitive operation which I

[16] For the formulation of his theory and the definition of terms like Agents, Patients, Recipients, see Gell, 1998: 17-27.

[17] Gell, 1998: 135-6.

[18] See § 4.3.5.

> identify as *the abduction of agency*. An 'index' in Peircean semiotics is a 'natural sign', that is, an entity from which the observer can make a *causal inference* of some kind. The usual example of an 'index' is visible smoke, betokening 'fire'.[19]

Bacchae is a work in which not only (as so typically in Tragedy and Comedy) the contours of the *Lebenswelt* are very sharply articulated and made perceptibly operative in the action, but in which also we experience a very "art-like" set of situations. It is a drama of disastrous inferences and misconstrued causation, of efficacious objects (skins, thyrsoi, wreaths, hair, wine, bodies as objects, fire) and mortal beings distinguished by their subjection to forms of divine motivation and agency, which they fail to appreciate. At its very heart the *Bacchae* is the story of forms of agency, mortal and immortal, their "abduction" and "non-abduction". For this reason, the very faculty for human agency and sociality, which is cognition, is the recurrent, even constant topic on the lips of the protagonists in this work.[20]

5.2.4 Abduction

"Abduction" is a logical operation. It is present or evoked in *Bacchae* largely through its omission, its special and consequential kind of failure to be brought into effect. Abduction is "a case of synthetic inference 'where we find some very curious circumstances, which would be explained by the supposition that it was a case of some general rule, and thereupon adopt that supposition (Eco 1976: 131, citing Peirce ii. 624)."[21]. As Eco defined it:

> Abduction . . . is a *tentative and hazardous tracing* of a system of signification rules which allow the sign to acquire its meaning. Abduction occurs with those natural signs which the Stoics called indicative and which are thought to be signs, yet without knowing what they signify'.[22]

For Gell the usefulness of the concepts of *index* and *abduction* lies in that, although conceding that there is "something irreducibly semiotic about art", they afford a circumventing of "the slightest imputation that (visual) art is 'like language' and that the relevant forms of

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[19] Gell, 1998: 13, his italics.

[20] There is a conspicuous abundance of synonymous and subtly differentiated terms for cognition, and its perceptual corollary, sight, in the play: *eidein, horān, leussein, augazein*; *manthanein*; *to sophon*, *sophia*, *phrenes*, *prapis*, *euphronein*, *sōphrosunē, kakophronein*, *gnōsis*,. Commensurately do we hear in different ways of the derangement of that faculty or capacity: *mania*, *kakophronein*, *ou phronein*, *lyssa*, *baccheuein*.

[21] Gell, 1998: 14.

[22] Eco, 1984: 40, my emphasis.

semiosis are language-like."[23] A Gellian anthropology has much to offer since he is focused not on any kind of linguistic binarism[24]. This is especially salutary for the interpretation of the Attic theatre and *Bacchae*, an example of Tragedy in which the relationships that emerge from or are constituted by *seeing* – the visible and invisible – and *hearing* are peculiarly brilliantly explored. Articulating the relationship between events and rules, like that between the spoken word, *parole,* and the conclusions we draw about speech, *langue*; or how *acts* become *facts*; how syntagm is entangled with paradigm; or how "seeings" become perspectives and ideas – these will be essential to interpreting *Bacchae*.

It is hoped that conscripting Gell's own conscription of (Peircean, Eco's) *index*, *abduction* and *social agency* will serve well a work in which non-linguistic, extra-discursive, non-elenchic strategies of knowing are called for from the protagonists, and thus by extension perhaps also from the audience. Do we come to *know* through *talk*, by taking turns asking and answering questions, or do we *know* when we are unanimous *singers* – having one voice and thus being one person, *athroōi stomati*[25] – of a kind of knowledge that is not arrived at but that arrives, as if of its own accord, has been and is *there* – such seems to be the present and *open* question of *Bacchae*. βούλομαι μαθεῖν "I wish to know"[26] – one way or another, the persons of Tragedy are ever seeking to find out things, to learn, to know and understand and their situations are always showing what a difficult problem the desire for knowing, *mathos*, perpetually remains.

The inadequacy of a "linguistic model" of interpretation in the vicinity of Dionysus in the *Bacchae* is not only just made manifest, but even becomes thematic in the drama in a fundamental way[27]. It is as if, in *Bacchae*, semiotic convention – the language model – is displaced by, or at least subordinated to, phenomena and their *experience*; language (conventional, normatively semiotic) must give way to "natural signs" and "hypotheses derived *ad hoc* from the 'case' under consideration". It is not ordinary logic but a kind of inspired, leaping logic of the imagination or of faith that is required to apprehend Dionysus. This leap and not the continuous strategic "jumping" of the wagerer like Kadmos is what

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[23] Gell, 1998: 14.

[24] Gell, 1998: 13, "To simplify the problem, I shall henceforth confine the discussion to the instance of visual art, or at least, 'visible' art, excluding verbal and musical art, though I recognize that in practice these are usually inseparable. So the 'things' of which I speak may be understood to be real, physical things, unique and identifiable, not performances, readings, reproductions, etc.".

[25] 725-6: Ἴακχον ἀθρόωι στόματι τὸν Διὸς γόνον / Βρόμιον καλοῦσαι.

[26] Eur.: πυθέσθαι βούλομαι, *Hipp.* 910; βούλομαι μαθεῖν, *Supp.* 750; *El.* 299, 773; *HF* 142 ἱστορεῖν ἃ βούλομαι, 1126; βούλομαι σαφῶς μαθεῖν, *Phoen.* 904; βούλομαι δέ σ' ἐξελέγξαι, *IA* 335. Soph.: *OC* 504; fr. 1130. 3.

[27] On the common semiotic model, Gell, 1998: 66, "Semiologic or interpretative theories of art assume that works of art are vehicles of meaning (signs, symbols) which spectators have to decode on the basis of their familiarity with the semiological system used by the artist to encode the meanings they contain. I do not deny that works of art are sometimes intended and received as objects of aesthetic appreciation and that it is sometimes the case that works of art function semiotically, but I specifically reject the notion that they always do."

Dionysus desires. Such a kind of daring – *tolmān*[28] – or inspired leap did Eco (from Peirce) attribute to Kepler in the example he used to illustrate what abductive process is:

> Kepler noticed that the orbit of Mars passes through points *x* and *y* (this example is given by Peirce, *C. P.* 2.96): this was the Result, but the Rule of which this was a Case *was not yet known* (the consequents of this antecedent being, therefore, equally unknown). Points *x* and *y* could have been points of, among other possible geometrical figures, an ellipse. Kepler hypothesized the Rule (and this was *an act of imaginative courage*): they are the points of an ellipse. Therefore, if the orbit of Mars were in point of fact elliptical, then its passing through *x* and *y* would have been a case of that Rule.

Humans orbit one another in the social world passing through points in circuits, the shape and anterior cause of which, we may not know (their unclear motivations, the opaque forces that motivate them unbeknownst, also to themselves). What *rules* will we posit for the movements of those phenomena, which are the non-obvious acts and motivations of social actors, the persons always coming into being that are revealed *ex post facto*, through *praxis* or *drān* – that is the question that Drama implicitly posits.

Pentheus is a man who reads *acts* as *movements*[29], deducting from rules about human character and desire that he holds as *a priori.* He fails to make the leap to the *Rule of Agency*, so to speak, "others are not agents" he seems to say, and the effect will be to make of himself no agent: women are easily corruptible, they have not a man's integrity; foreigners are not as healthy or intelligent as Greeks; being attractive means having made yourself attractive in order to get what you want out of others; people are moved unquestioningly by lucre; being liked and feared is an absolute value; to conceal is to deceive, not to preserve; things are what they seem and questions are not necessary, for by these deductive premises life and the *polis* are successfully negotiated. So runs Pentheus' deductive logic. Eco, on the alternative to deduction and on Kepler's *inspired move*, continued:

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[28] "Daring undertakings" are what Athens is famous for, in *Bacchae* they are thwarted, perverted forms of "courage" and misadventure, the wrong kinds of *leap*: failure to recognize leads to failing to "not dare" fight against a god, 635-6: πρὸς θεὸν γὰρ ὢν ἀνὴρ / ἐς μάχην ἐλθεῖν ἐτόλμησ'. Pentheus alone will dare to walk through Thebes dressed as a bacchant, where once he "alone travailed for the city", 961-2: κόμιζε διὰ μέσης με Θηβαίας χθονός· / μόνος γὰρ αὐτῶν εἰμ' ἀνὴρ τολμῶν τόδε. Kadmos calls what his maenadic daughters have done to Pentheus in the mountains, their *tolmēmata*, 1222: ἤκουσα γάρ του θυγατέρων τολμήματα. Thucydides' history of the contemporary war, might be said to be an account of *tolmēmata*, and by their "daring", adventuresomeness he defines the Athenians, see for example, Thuc. 1.70.3: αὖθις δὲ οἱ μὲν καὶ παρὰ δύναμιν τολμηταὶ καὶ παρὰ γνώμην κινδυνευταὶ καὶ ἐν τοῖς δεινοῖς εὐέλπιδες· τὸ δὲ ὑμέτερον τῆς τε δυνάμεως ἐνδεᾶ πρᾶξαι τῆς τε γνώμης μηδὲ τοῖς βεβαίοις πιστεῦσαι τῶν τε δεινῶν μηδέποτε οἴεσθαι ἀπολυθήσεσθαι.

[29] See on Wittgenstein's question about movements and actions Giddens, 1984: 65-6, like Gell's distinction between actions and happenings, see § 4.3.2.

> The abduction, of course, had to be verified. In the light of the hypothesized rule, *x* and *y* were 'signs' of the further passage of Mars through the points *z* and *k*. It was obviously necessary to wait for Mars at *the spot where the first 'sign' had led one to expect its appearance*. Once the hypothesis was verified, the abduction had to be widened (and verified): the behaviour of Mars was hypothetically thought to be shared by all other planets. The behaviour of a planet thus became a sign for the general behaviour of planets. Abduction is a very complex mode of inference . . .

While Kepler was describing the involuntary (non-voluntary) movements of planets, it is the case that people in the historical world and onstage in Attic drama move around one another and try to understand, predict, anticipate those movements. What we do with the *movements* that rise up or become perceptible within us, our motivations, is decisive. Do we develop a kind of inspired rule by which we understand ourselves and the persons around us and translate our and their "movements" into "actions"? Or do we act as if our impulses and desires were simply foreign bodies whose movements just *happen*? Do we act as ones resigned only to register, only ever partially to seize the significance our experiences? Do we commit only to deducing from prior, unchanging paradigms about what people are "really" like? These are questions that *Bacchae*, in the spectacle of Pentheus and the fate of the Kadmeians, poses to the audience.

Verification, intelligibility and all manner of inference for explanation and *readiness* are the essential and ever-present operations of persons in the midst of other persons. What the movements of planets were for Kepler are, by my analogy, the impulses and motives of fellow social actors in the *Lebenswelt*. Persons qualify and interpret the "motions" of others and deploy different strategies to know and relate to them. Motives and impulses are not "motions", one may object, but how would you represent motivation? Motive, desire and character are only ever inferred from acts (including, of course, talk and thought, the externalized or manifested voice)[30]. Drama shows acts because to do so is the way in which we will infer those non-phenomenal properties called motivations, desires and intention [31].

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[30] Just as we habitually use the *Metaphorik* of space – "insides", "interiority", "depth", "further realities" – in our dancing around the elusive property of agency and personhood, so may we further employ the imagery of "motion" to describe the dynamic environment of motivation and intentionality. This is not meant to equate motives with natural forces. See Taylor on the persistence of the spatial metaphor § 3.3.7 n. 242.

[31] Arist. *Poet.*1450 a 16-23 ἡ γὰρ τραγῳδία μίμησίς ἐστιν οὐκ ἀνθρώπων ἀλλὰ πράξεων καὶ βίου . . . οὔκουν ὅπως τὰ ἤθη μιμήσωνται πράττουσιν, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἤθη συμπεριλαμβάνουσιν [*sumperilambanein*] διὰ τὰς πράξεις· ὥστε τὰ πράγματα καὶ ὁ μῦθος τέλος τῆς τραγῳδίας, τὸ δὲ τέλος μέγιστον ἁπάντων. Aristotle speaks of action and character as separate elements of Tragedy, but he prioritizes action and the structure of events "because tragedy is a representation not of people as such but of actions and life, and both happiness and

Bacchae problematizes knowledge and apprehending. There is a basic problem of integration in the play: how is the new, the strange, the foreign, the as yet unknown, to become part of the environment of the familiar, which is the historical, human, social context. To know, in a sense, means to integrate that which is *outside* (of the self, the house, the city, the culture, *nomoi*) into the inside order of existence, which is the scene of human sociality and exchange (with self, kin, co-presents, contemporaries, etc.). In his myths it is integrating Dionysus, incorporating him into the situation in the right way, that is always the problem or challenge. The healthy or inspired city integrates the god into its life, knows him through festivals, through dance, song, wine and theatre. Evaluate, admit, receive hospitably, detect innately, infer appropriately, have the right bearing: Euripides' Dionysus wants all of this from mortals if he is not to punish them. We may suspect that not having those things in place is its own kind of punishment: and *that* may be the point of "Dionysus", the recreation of the artist Euripides, in this context where it has been conceivable that there may be "some Zeus out there giving birth to new gods"[32].

Ordinarily, motives are assumed to be quite straightforward, that ultimately there are no surprises. People must become predictable in order that we feel in control of our environments. They seek to construe and devise rules about their fellows and how they go about doing so is decisive. Today, for example, the political orthodoxy in many countries is based on an economic (and ethical) logic with a fallacious premise: people are rational

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unhappiness rest on action." (trans. Halliwell, 1987: 37). Note Halliwell's comments on the "challenging (and frequently misunderstood) . . . [of Aristotle's] subordintaion of character to action", Halliwell, 1987: 94, who notes 'a slight equivocation' on the point in the philosopher and concludes, "The fundamental principle, I think, is that many actions will necessarily have a degree of characterisation built into them, since their nature will presuppose particular ethical dispositions; but some actions are not of this kind, and in these cases characterless actions is a possibility. There is, then, probably a sense in which Ar. considers that *character can be either implicit or explicit*, but it is the latter – the positive ways in which a dramatist can illuminate the moral motivations of his agents – which he has in mind when making most of his remarks on the subject." Characterless action may be possible, but is actionless character? Do we not only ever infer character from action, past and present. I mean by this to suggest that the equivocation in Aristotle is understandable when there is not a sufficient sense of the radically dynamic character of character. It is something always issuing out and into acts. If one imagines character is the *structure* of a person, something like the frame which patterns their acts, then one will introduce this ambiguity into one's logic of the relationship between character and action. I suggest that character is not "there" in the normal way of thinking about things, that Aristotle seems to imply here. It is not a structure but structurational, i.e. it is the substantial framework which governs and shapes *praxeis* but what we discern when we wish to discern motivations, when we wish to form rules about acts. Character is like "institution" in Giddens, 1984. It is a dynamically recursive property, absent and suddenly apprehended, shaped above all by the fact of time and its constant movement, it is "produced" by acts and reproduces further kinds of acts. When we say such a person has such a character we are doing a binding act, gathering together different moments and acts and saying they constitute a pattern and the "structure" that produced that pattern is character. I suspect that drama "shows acts" and requires of the audience a certain kind of work, which is the 'gathering together' *sumperilambanein*, a kind of inference of character from *praxeis*. On this "equivocation" see also § 3.1 n. 9 and § 5.5.3 p. 230. Further on structure and structuration see Giddens, 1984: 1-40 and § 1.1 and § 6.7.

[32] So did Pentheus scornfully ask at 467: Ζεὺς δ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖ τις ὃς νέους τίκτει θεούς; New gods are not specious but contain truth and value. On New gods in contemporary Athens, see Parker, 1996: 152-98

animals who supposedly always act in their self-interest. Yet "self-interest" amongst humans, as we see them *in fact* behave, is clearly not exhausted by the basic accumulation of goods and competition for prestige or clinging to life as an absolute good *an sich*, that the economists and their acolytes in political power take it to be. Self-interest is an elusive thing, inevitably so when the 'self' is so hard to pin down or account for. Persons are not as predictable as they seem to those, like Pentheus, who are already in power. If you are in power, apparently, you seem to think that you understand things. If you did not, how could you have got into power – so runs the technocrat's and autocrat's self-satisfied logic, a feedback-loop of authority and self-affirmation, the epistemic basis of his hybris.

Events and responses and the meaning of things, how they hang together, these are not foregone. Phenomena are indeed underdetermined and always coming into being. There *are* "new things", there *are* unknown things, things that we may not even know we do not know[33]. Perhaps even what we ourselves are may be the next unfamiliar, new thing we shall come to discover, since no less than everything else are we subject time and *difference*. The question must be how we shall recognize new, strange things – *ta nea* – how interpret, how know them – how, that is, relate to them and understand them, (which means how understand their relating to their own parts and to other things). For Peirce, Eco and Gell invoking them, the most readily useful examples of 'index' are two phenomena, which happen to have a very prominent place in *Bacchae*. In this light, *Bacchae* can appear to be something of a case-study in detection of agency and the logic of inference:

> The usual example of an 'index' is visible smoke, 'betokening fire'. Fire causes smoke, hence smoke is an 'index' of fire. Another very common example of an index is the human smile, indexing a friendly attitude. However, as we all know, smoke can arise in the absence of fire, and smiles may deceive.[34]

Dionysus is profoundly linked with the blazing torch, and with fire-miracles, with his fiery conception by *Zeus Keraunios*, Zeus as thunder-bolt, with flames and the hearth. His followers are said sensationally to feast in their frenzy, on unfired meat[35]. Fire, with Dionysus, has not the technical function for processing, for softening and moulding that it

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[33] To paraphrase that most *realpolitischer* man, George Rumsfeld, who was using a differentiated ignorance as a kind of twisted epistemic pretext for action in the run-up to the invasion of Iraq (which had clearly been decided *a priori*). His actual words were "As we know, there are known knowns; there are things we know we know. We also know there are known unknowns, which is to say: we know there are some things we do not know. But there are also unknown unknowns—the ones we don't know we don't know." This was of course not an inspired insight into the relativity of knowledge, but a rhetorical strategy for getting away with acting as if he *did* know. That said, in the vicinity of Dionysus, as in that of Socrates, we begin to glimpse that there are things we did not know we did not know.

[34] Gell, 1998: 13.

[35] 139: ὠμοφάγον χάριν. Cf. Eur. fr. 472 *Cretans* and see Detienne, 1977.

ordinarily has with the god of fire in *technē,* Hephaistos[36]. It, rather, is a darting, glancing, animated phenomenon, something that elicits strong response, uncannily life-like. It is not matter that is *plastos*, mouldable, with Dionysus, but the human person and its motivations. The mind is his material.

In *Bacchae* fire is evocatively juxtaposed with those liquescent fibres that dance and blow about: the hair[37]. A kind of somatic smoke, the conspicuous sign of the spark of life inside the human body, (a natural sign from which we infer so much about health, station, *otium*, gender, age), hair corresponds to fire in the typically Dionysiac manner of correspondence, not logically but in its phenomenal form, *morphē*, 144-50:

> Συρίας δ' ὡς λιβάνου κα-
> πνὸν ὁ Βακχεὺς ἀνέχων
> πυρσώδη φλόγα πεύκας
> ἐκ νάρθηκος ἀίσσει
> δρόμωι καὶ χοροῖσιν
> πλανάτας ἐρεθίζων
> ἰαχαῖς τ' ἀναπάλλων
> τρυφερόν <τε> πλόκαμον εἰς αἰθέρα ῥίπτων.

[36] Torch: the presence of Dionysus is very often accompanied by and thus marked by the fragrant (often pine) and dynamic (usually "tossed") fire-torch. 144-7, 306-9. Cf. Aesch. *Bassarids* fr. 23b Παγγαίου γὰρ ἀργυρήλατον/πρῶν' †ες τὸ τῆς ἀστραπῆς† πευκᾶεν σέλας. Also *Xantriai* fr. 171: κάμακες πεύκης οἱ πυρίφλεκτοι. Conception and parturition: 2-9, 88-93, 288-91, 519-24. Fire apparitions: 594-626, 1018. *Keraunios*: 6, 93, 244, 288, 598. On lightning and Zeus *kataibatēs* and *enēlusios,* see Dodds on 6-12, where he gives extensive remarks also in Semelē as Anatolian Earth Goddess, "Bride of the Thunderbolt". Just as mortals carry the fire, a form or descendant of Zeus' fire, his uncanny touching of the earth, so do they recreate in Dionysiac ritual and celebration the sound of thunder with the drums that are the god's gift; so do we find in that rich evocation of the powerful sensory experience of Dionysus at Aesch. *Edonians* fr. 57. See Seaford at 197 and Burkert, 1960/1961: 208-13, lightning-struck spots, *enēlusia*. See further discussion in the context of a study on Dionysiac and Orphic mystery religion at Edmonds, 2004: 85. For references to *enēlusia* see the Pindaric Dithyrambic fragment fr. 70b 15-20 and the fragment of the Aeschylean *Women of Argos* set in the aftermath of the internecine war of the Seven against Thebes in which the body of Capaneus, struck by Zeus' lightning, like Pentheus' corpse, has been reduced to the "remains of his joints", Aesch. fr. 17.

[37] Cf. also the 'fire miracle' by which the maenads are seen to carry flames on their heads and yet not be burnt (just as they handle snakes and wild animals but are protected by a Dionysiac immunity from the dangers against which mortals need usually to be so vigilant (695-700, 765-8), 757-8: ἐπὶ δὲ βοστρύχοις/ πῦρ ἔφερον, οὐδ' ἔκαιεν.; and the fire prodigy at 1082-85, where a voice speaks from the aithēr, the Stranger has disappeared, only his disembodied voice is now perceived, then all nature is held by silence and the "light of a holy fire" is seen to "bind fast" sky and earth, 1082-3: καὶ πρὸς οὐρανὸν/ καὶ γαῖαν ἐστήριζε φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός. See also Sophocles' great hymn to Dionysus, where Dionysus is very powerfully defined by fire, Soph. *Ant.* 1126-1152. There Dionysus is discerned through "flashing, thick smoke", 1126-7: στέροψ ὄπωπε /λιγνύς. Dionysus honours Thebes with his "mother split by the thunderbolt" ('bride of lightning' in Fagles', 1982 translation), ματρὶ σὺν κεραυνίᾳ·, 1139. Dionysus is the supreme link between the changeless domain of the stars and the world of perpetual change of humans, just as Zeus' lightning instantaneously links earth and sky and the product is Dionysus; so with Dionysus' dancing the stars are no longer only distant, immoveable signs but said to "breathe fire", 1146-7: Ἰὼ πῦρ πνεόντων/ χοράγ' ἄστρων.

Like the smoke of Syrian incense
The Bacchos holding up
The fiery flame of the pine,
With the *narthēx* he leaps[38],
Racing and dancing
Exciting wanderers
He is swinging them around with *Iach*, *Iach*-shouts
And tossing his gorgeous curls in the *aithēr*.[39]

In the first episode, following these lines from the choral *parodos*, Teiresias will also invoke a Dionysus whom "you will see him leaping on the rocks of Delphi with pine torches, brandishing and shaking that bacchic wand (*kladon* 'branch') on the twin-peaked plateau and great throughout Greece"[40]. With this specially fiery and smoky quality of Dionysus' in mind, both his ongoing presence and the aorist event of his birth (his original coming into presence), ought we to see that futile Pentheus rushing around calling all his servants pointlessly (*matēn*) into action to fetch water and put out an extraordinary, unquenchable fire – the still living flame on Semelē tomb that has flared up – which he has misapprehended as a 'normal' fire threatening to consume his palace[41]. This misprision is never corrected by Pentheus; soon after he will again speak of the fire of bacchic worship, like the disease, *nosos*, he had seen from the beginning as an infectious, communicable and existential threat to the *polis*, a reproach to all Hellas[42].

Dionysus is also that figure whose smile or laughter, *gelān* – its ambiguity and meaning in *Bacchae* – has been the object of much discussion in the scholarship on the play[43]. Laughter like fire is not necessarily a sign that needs to be seen and then deciphered. It is a natural phenomenon that can elicit an instantaneous reaction; it is infectious like fire and associated with pleasure like the sweet-smelling smoke that fills the nostrils wherever Dionysus is to be found. It has the manifest double-quality of being a natural reflex but also being expressive of cultural posture. Laughter indicates the presence of persons. Laughing alone, like

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[38] For *ek* as instrumental here, and not referring to the pervious line, i.e. so as to give "streaming out of the *narthēx*" see Verdenius, 1981: 311-12.

[39] *Iachos* is one of the cult names of Dionysus. It does not refer, in the way that lingusitic signs ordinarily do, but is the vocalic trace of his presence. He is a god of the most spontaneous and vocative evocation. His names are almost constitutive rather than designative.

[40] On 306-9, ἔτ' αὐτὸν ὄψηι κἀπὶ Δελφίσιν πέτραις / πηδῶντα σὺν πεύκαισι δικόρυφον πλάκα, / πάλλοντα καὶ σείοντα βακχεῖον κλάδον, / μέγαν τ' ἀν' Ἑλλάδ'. Dodds: "Dionysus predicts the acceptance of Dion. 'one day' (ἔτι) at Delphi, which shall make him μέγαν ἀν' Ἑλλάδα." Seaford translates: "You will see him made great throughout Greece." On Thracian Dionysus and his acceptance at Delphi, and thence Greece, see Dodds pp. 108-110 and Rohde, 1892-94.

[41] 622-6.

[42] 778-9: ἤδη τόδ' ἐγγὺς ὥστε πῦρ ὑφάπτεται/ὕβρισμα βακχῶν, ψόγος ἐς Ἕλληνας μέγας.

[43] Foley, 1980, 1985. Chaston, 2010: 206-225. Halliwell, 2008: 133-9.

drinking alone, is often taken as a troubling "over-association" with self, a sign of unhealthy solipsism. Whatever the reason for laughter, an uncannily involuntary and also ordinary action, whether it is real or put-on, laughter is an index of the presence or dissipation of agency, like tears. To the god's fire and smile we shall add a third important index in *Bacchae*, that of hair. Sometimes a 'natural sign' can serve to indicate the absence of agency; the agent we "motivate" behind hair is nature, *physis*. When hair is undone, ungroomed, in no way checked, *kōluein*, curbed, *chalinōn*, or given form, *kosmein*, it is a sure sign that that "alertness" or "tension" that ordinarily characterizes social interactions, has been relaxed or come thoroughly undone, *luomenon*.

How are we to know this god who, before all super-natural figures in Greek poetry, makes a question and a problem out of knowledge, out of *how* we are to know and recognize divine agency and truth? Euripides' *Bacchae* suggests that it is not by deduction, not by signs that are so easily refuted or denied as only masking arbitrary human motivation. We are induced to abduct Dionysus' presence, to divine him from present, 'natural signs'. The strategies of decipherment and inference that belong to and hold for the day-to-day *durée* of the city and its flow of transactions and ordinary encounters in the agora and in the chambers of persuasion and deliberation become inadequate and thereby also relative.

5.3.1 *Pyr, Keraunos*: Contained Fire, Uncontained Fire

κρύψε δὲ πῦρ
He concealed fire.[44]

As Dionysus is a god associated with the mind in certain free-flowing conditions, and of the streaming body and flying, untied hair, so too is he the god of fire in certain impressive states. The gift of Prometheus to mortals is an alchemical element, by which humans process, mould and refine, bending – *gnamptein* – the matter and bodies of nature to human purpose[45]. Through fire, mortals draw substances into the human economy of needs and functions, they turn matter into materials. It is a gift, which, like all gifts, obligates its recipient in unforeseeable ways. The price incurred for fire is the loss of a utopian world in which fire were not necessary.

Beyond, however, the interpersonal politics of the Titan Prometheus and the "new god", Olympian Zeus, whose son Dionysus is so much himself a "new god", fire is an ambiguous force in itself [46]. This is powerfully expressed in *Bacchae*, as it is elsewhere in Greek poetry. Fire is both creative and destructive: it enhances human agency, it is the tireless "servant" of human arts and industry, but it is also a dangerous element, an uncannily animate, engenered and further engendering, phenomenon (as human servants, or women, the engenderers and *Pflegerinnen* of the *polis*, can seem uncannily agentful when given the space on the Attics platform). It spreads quickly out of the control of human will, like a servant class that discovers its own agency and becomes uncontainable. Like pestilence, *nosos*, or hysteria, *mania*, it is a threat to the *polis*, but one with a paradoxical power both to destroy and to cleanse, to make *katharos*.

Breathing, giving off heat, consuming: fire, like a child (like the vulnerable infant, Dionysus, who had to be so carefully shielded at birth), requires fostering and care[47]. Like a man it moves, ascends, utters and yields meanings to those empowered through an inspired *mania*

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[44] Hes. *Erga* 50.

[45] On fire in Greek ritual life, see Burkert *GR*: "Feuerrituale", 100-104. Burkert is very good in evoking the sensual, olfactory power of fire at sacrifice, see esp. 102.

[46] Burk. *GR,* 100: "Feuer ist Grundlage zivilisatorisches Lebens, ist ursprünglichster Schutz vor Raubtieren – und darum auch vor bösen Geistern –, spendet Warme und Helligkeit, und doch bleibt es schmerzhaft-gefährlich, ja Urbild der Vernichtung: was groß, fest und greifbar war, löst sich erglühend in Rauch und Asche auf."

[47] Nursing fire, Burk. *GR,* 100: "Wie man im Haus den Herd nicht erlöschen lässt, wird auch in vielen Tempeln ein ewiges Feuer unterhalten, voran im Apollontempel von Delphi, aber auch etwa im Tempel des Apollon Lykeios in Argos, des Apollon Karneios in Kyrene." cf. Aesch. *Cho*. 1037, Paus. 10.24.4. Woman is nurse in Euripides and even fire itself, see fr. 429 from *Hippolytus Veiled* Nursing Dionysus: 556-9; Dionysus accompanied by nurses at Hom *Il.* 6. 132-7. See the reference in the first Hypothesis to Eur. *Med.* to a *Trophoi* "Nurses of Dionysus", by Aeschylus, in which the nurses of the god are boiled in a cauldron and rejuvenated, see also Ov. *Met.* 7. 294-6.

to take its signs[48]. If it is so that humans naturally *distinguish between living and non-living things*[49], we also say that fire seems to "live". The greatest enhancer of human agency in its gift of technology and its power to process and transform, fire appears itself to possess and indicate the possession of an inscrutable form of agency. Certainly it seems to have an appetite, and apparent "will" to live and enlarge itself. Fire, like the tyrant or the tragic protagonist or even the indomitable stomach of that most self-controlled and mental of men, *polumētis Odusseus*– γαστέρα δ' οὔ πως ἔστιν ἀποκρύψαι μεμαυῖαν – which is never sated and not subject to concealment[50].

Fire, mastered and contained, preserved and reproducible – keeping the domesticated "breed" of fire – this is the pre-condition for the existence of the *polis*. Without fire the potential for humans to master their environment and create the artificial world, the world of artifice, of technology, the context produced through techniques, which is the city, is very curtailed indeed. As Aeschylus' Prometheus assertively puts it in *Prometheus Bound*[51]: "All their skills have mortals received from Prometheus." The difference between Dionysus and Hephaistos is the difference between the wild and the tame. Hephaistos is fire domesticated and appropriated for human purposiveness. Hephaistos' is that fire, which in its form and usefulness, Prometheus had stolen from Zeus and given mortals. Dionysus' fire is the pointless, non-utilitarian fire whose power is aesthetic and sensual, inhering in the effect it has on the co-present: its heat, fragrance, animacy, brightness and ambience. We light or preserve this kind of fire for its own sake and then derive its benefits; we do not seek those benefits and then light it up.

So do the two gods differ in that Hephaistos is effective, Dionysus affective. Thus was Dionysus said by the Archaic poet, in a poem probably composed for consumption in a sympotic context, to have been the god who, with his wine, alone could disarm Hephaistos[52]. This was on the occasion that Hephaistos had used his technical skill to contrive another mythic *dolos*, the gift of a throne for Hera, which was in fact a trap. It was revenge for Hera's having cast Hephaistos out of Olympos. It is the triumph of Dionysiac *pharmakon* – organic, dissolving cognition and the step-by-step calculative intelligence – over Hephaistion *technē* –

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[48] Such divination is the imposing of one's own, common, human motivations, no natural signs being traced, according to Pentheus. So has he inferred when he first sets eyes on Kadmos and Teiresias in bacchant garb, that it is all only a scheme by the seer to introduce a new god and collect wages for the observing *skopein* of birds and *empura* fire offerings, 127: σκοπεῖν πτερωτὰ κἀμπύρων μισθοὺς φέρειν.

[49] See § 4.2.2, Gell, 1998: 127.

[50] Hom. *Od.* 17. 286, see 286-9, where men "fit out ships and sail the barren seas bringing evils to enemies" on account of the insatiable *gastēr*; and again cursing the stomach as a motivating force that cannot be subdued at Hom. *Od.* 473-4: γαστέρος εἵνεκα λυγρῆς, / οὐλομένης, ἣ πολλὰ κάκ' ἀνθρώποισι δίδωσιν.

[51] Aesch. *PD* 506: πᾶσαι τέχναι βροτοῖσιν ἐκ Προμηθέως.

[52] Alcaeus fr. 349.

invention relying on successive reasoning and plodding strategy (he is the limp god, Dionysus the racing, dancing god, he comes, as the entering chorus had sung, racing and dancing, 148: δρόμωι καὶ χοροῖσιν)[53]. So too is the fire of Hephaistos a servant and instrument towards a *telos*, while by contrast the fire of Dionysus is a phenomenon the meaning of which is in its immediate effect, which is sensuous, devotional, aesthetic and affective – it is the difference, again, between servitude and service[54]. The very point of Dionsyiac fire is its charismatic presence, not an unrealized or absent *point* to which one is intending in the future, *elpizōn*. It is not a sign pointing to an absent referent or future objective; it refers only to itself, "points" only to its own presence[55].

Essentially too, there is no storage vessel, *pithos*, without fire, no metallurgy, no surplus, no capital and only the most rudimentary forms of exchange. Without civilization, there are few of the things that most sweeten and relieve human life on earth, (and also, according to Hesiod, not the same need for relief). It is impossible to imagine a pre-urban world in which the gifts of Demeter and Dionysus were accessible to many people at all[56]. Storage, containment of stuffs – the dry stuff of Demeter, and the wet stuff of Dionysus[57] – is the necessary condition for and thus the evidence of settled life. Without fire there cannot arise the techniques of manufacture to fabricate the vessels, houses and containing walls of the *polis*. Fire is the necessary condition for the emergence and sustaining of the *polis*. It has "proved mankind's teacher and great affordance, *poros*"[58].

The house itself, at the centre of which stands the sacred hearth, *hestia*, is a vessel for storing and nursing fire. The *narthex* is a mobile house, a container for carrying the precious and dangerous little flame, nursed offspring of the human *oikos* or of the god's original hearth in

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[53] At the opening of *Prometheus Bound*, Hephaistos has used his *technē* to chain Prometheus to the cliffs with "unbreakable fetters of adamantine bonds". *Kratos*, "Force", says to Hephaistos that it was the "flower of your skill, gleaming fire and all its skills" τὸ σὸν γὰρ ἄνθος, παντέχνου πυρὸς σέλας, Aesch. *PD* 7, which Prometheus had stolen and given humans, Aesch. *PD* 6-9.

[54] It is noteworthy how Dionysus and Hephaistos are both in many myths associated with binding and unbinding: Hephaistos with the chains that he smites in his workshop, Dionysus with garlands of flowers and ivy wreaths. Hephaistos ties up physically (Hera in Alcaeus, Aphrodite and Ares in Hom. *Od.* 8. 266-366); Dionysus ties persons together emotionally, marks them as common by dressing their heads with the same organic matter or undoes them cognitively, with wine or *mania*. On a context in which Dionysiac cult meets Hephaistion ritual see on the rites at Lemnos, Burkert *HN*: 212-218.

[55] Dionysus' torchlight is not at all like that famous relay of torches in Aesch. *Ag.* 1-33 which are simple beacons averting to a fact, in this case the Fall of Troy. Their function is to point to something (information about the absent Agamemnon) other than themselves; their form and nature disappears into their instrumental usefulness as a conveyor of messages.

[56] In its immediacy, its closeness to the present rather than a projected future and past, pre-agricultural life, subsistence economies before surplus, trade, accumulation and exchange may have offered features its compensations. The fantasy of the hunt (throughout *Bacchae* literally and figuratively, χαίρω θηρεύου-/σα, 1005-6) or of the eroticized, timeless life of pure sensuality 402-16, may be seen as an expression of nostalgia for such modes.

[57] 274-85.

[58] *PD* 110-11: ἥ διδάσκαλος τέχνης/πάσης βροτοῖς πέφηνε καὶ μέγας πόρος.

the temple, a container for hosuing gods[59]. Dionysus is said to 'toss' Pentheus' house, as his bacchants 'toss' the *narthex*, the fennel rod[60]. That narthex is, since Prometheus' first theft of fire from Zeus, the established vessel of choice for carrying fire, a kind of "Zeus' thigh" for transporting the seed of flame[61].

5.3.2: Where there is fire

φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός.[62]

Although fire is "present in almost every cult act of the Greeks"[63], it has a unique place in the Dionysiac cult, where alone we hear of fire prodigies:

> Von Feuerwundern is nur im Dionysoskult die Rede. Aber ein plötzliches Aufflammen des Altarfeuers gilt als Zeichen göttlicher Gegegnwart, was auch den Öl- und Weinspenden über dem Altar ihre eindrucksvolle Eigenart gibt.[64]

The role of fire as index of divine presence is of special relevance, one may suspect, in the world of Dionysiac experiences. The *presence* of Dionysus – his entrance, proximity and manifestation in human communities – is the essential element of his nature and its meaning. Marks of his presence, *not only signs but traces*, are not incidental here, but fundamental. His meaning is not something that becomes clear, like that of one who has been by a while and taught a doctrine. It was always there, in his presence. For Dionysus is the god who craves – *chrēzein* – relationship, and his is the "ultrasocial" relationship that depends on co-presence.

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[59] On temple as house for a god see, for example, Coldstream in Easterling & Muir [edd.], 1985: 67-97.

[60] 622-4: ἐν δὲ τῶιδε τῶι χρόνωι/ ἀνετίναξ' ἐλθὼν ὁ Βάκχος δῶμα καὶ μητρὸς τάφωι/ πῦρ ἀνῆψ'·

[61] Aesch. *PD* 109-10: ναρθηκοπλήρωτον δὲ θηρῶμαι πυρὸς/ πηγὴν κλοπαίαν.

[62] 1083: "Light of a sacred fire."

[63] Burk. *GR,* 100: "Daher die vielschichtige Faszination des Feuers, ohne das bei den Griechen kaum ein Kultakt vollzogen wird." Much of the fascination of fire derives from its apparent animacy, its *life*. It offers a perfect example of what I think invests things with the quality of the uncanny: the appearance of having "life" or agency which is hard to locate, difficult to deny but equally so to place. Fire is uncanny because it violates any too easily familiar discrimination between living and non-living things, that faculty to discern which humans are supposedly born with, see § 4.2.2, Gell, 1998: 127. Idols like Dionysus, as a *Maskengott*, frustrate the supposedly innate capacity to distinguish between living and non-living; his ambiguity is an affordance for belief, a crack through which the doubting mind can enter. Thomas' fault is that he did not enter in the spirit of belief but insisted on putting his finger through the "crack" in the resurrected Christ's body, John 20. 24-9.

[64] Burk. *GR,* 100. Fire Miracles: [Plut. Themistocles 13]; [Arist.] *Mir. Ausc.* 842 a 15-24.

Nocturnal rites, especially, may be invested with dramatic power and mood, through the use of burning torches. These are a notable feature of festivals of Dionysus, where the god – it becomes evident through the mood and the wine and the dancing, the movement and the changed state of minds and bodies – is present[65]. Nocturnal events and the power of night's occluding atmosphere, in which the senses are heightened, where fear mixes with awe, a slackening of social alertness, a loosening of the reins of self-control and a relaxation of the bindings of social life – these will take a central place in the drama of Pentheus, the Theban maenads and the foreign bacchants. The darkness of night will make Dionysus' theophany, in the form of a column of fire – φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός – stretching between earth and sky, all the more spectacular. With Dionysus, darkness reveals.

5.3.3 *A Still Living Flame*[66]: The spot where the first 'sign' had led one to expect its appearance

Fire and smoke, in *Bacchae* as in cult, will function in a very articulated way to signal the spatio-temporal presence of Dionysus. Gell makes the helpful distinction between presence and appearance, one which is most pertinent for this play in which the audience is asked to discern presence, which does not depend on any given kind of appearance[67]. Dionysus, near the very beginning of his prologue, says that he "sees", is "looking at . . . the memorial of his lightning-struck mother . . . a still-living flame of fire" 6-8. We cannot say for certain whether or not the *mise-en-scène* of the production would have included a real flame onstage[68]. It

[65] Burk. *GR,* 101: "Nächtliche Prozessionen mit Fackeln gehören zu den elementaren, immer wieder eindrucksvollen Bräuchen; sie haben ihren Platz vor allem in Dionysosfesten.". Cf. e.g. the late Euripidean *Ion*, where is mentioned a "torch procession of Bakkhos": ἐς φανάς γε Βακχίου. Eur. *Ion* 550.

[66] 8.

[67] Cf. Gell, 1998: 26 on "natural signs" and representations of gods in his theory of the *art nexus*: "the aniconic image of the god in the form of a stone is an index of the god's spatio-temporal presence, but not his appearance. But in this case, the spatial location of the stone is not 'arbitrarily' or 'conventionally' associated with the spatial location of the god; the stone functions as a 'natural sign' of the god's location just as smoke is a natural sign of the spatial location of fire."

[68] Taplin, 1978, *Greek Tragedy in Action* is a classic on the staging of Tragedy does not discuss the issue of the fire, nor does Wyles, 2016. On Eur. *Ba.* 6-12, Dodds gives lengthy and detailed notes, but does not comment on the question of the flame as concrete stage prop. Seaford is good elsewhere on the question of seeing what is not there, seeing with the mind's eye, but does not discuss the question of the possible pyrotechnical stage effects. See Seaford, 1987 and the lengthy notes at Seaford, 1996 on 918-9, for an argument that there is a mirror, instrument of initiatory ceremony, used on stage (although no mirror is explicitly referred to in the text). The crucial point is that there is a productive ambiguity here (and ultimate unverifiability, as much for modern interpreters as ancient believers and spectators). Theatre involves seeing things that are not there, seeing things and persons (actors) as if they were not there or not themselves and seeing things that are there differently. In different ways having a real flame and not having a real flame, which would nevertheless be 'seen' by the spectator's eye drawn by the god's words to see, would be equally powerful. On the questions of representing such hard-to-present events as earthquakes, see Dodds' extensive remarks (and "the difficulties which have been invoked against the common view of the scene") at Dodds: 147-9. See on 596-600 p. 315 n. 78 below.

would be surprising if it did not, since the sight of flame, the smell of smoke and its impressive materialization of earlier events, its *abductive power*, would be so effective, 6-9:

> ὁρῶ δὲ μητρὸς μνῆμα τῆς κεραυνίας
> τόδ' ἐγγὺς οἴκων καὶ δόμων ἐρείπια
> τυφόμενα Δίου πυρὸς ἔτι ζῶσαν φλόγα,
> ἀθάνατον[69] Ἥρας μητέρ' εἰς ἐμὴν ὕβριν.
>
> I see the memory of mother's thunder-bolt
> Here nearby the rubble of house and palace
> Smouldering the still-living flame of the fire of Zeus,
> Undying hybris of Hera against my mother.

The flame that flickers in the ruins of his mother's house is the trace of the events of Dionysus' conception by Zeus. His legitimate status as son of Semelē *and* Zeus is for him very largely the issue at stake in the drama. It is a fact which has been repudiated by the god's Theban relatives. The smouldering ruins of his blasted mother and the still living flame dancing over those ruins are the traces of an event (and an event can be either an "action" or a "happening"; we need further evidence to determine which it be). It is "'an undying outrage'", i.e. both the outrage and "an undying token of the outrage."[70]. So not merely the "happening" of a random lightning-strike then, this flame reveals an "action". We are to abduct the agency – the erstwhile presence of the person – of Zeus (and Hera's agency distributed through Semelē) from this index, and thereby the super-natural agency of this figure speaking to us in the disguise of a natural, historical human-agent.

Aside from the question of stage effects, we should remember that fire and smoke and sacrifice or consecration to Dionysus at a fire-altar, form a feature of the theatrical ritual. In the temple sits the priest of Dionysus, over the action looks a statue of Dionysus[71], behind the *skēnē* stands a precinct and temple to Dionysus, and in full view of all, stage front, smouldering and filling the nostrils of all present with the fragrance of its smoke, the *thymelē*, fire-altar to Dionysus. In a recent essay "The Impact of *Bacchae* at its Original Performance", Edith Hall vividly evoked the ceremonials and ambience of the Dionysiac festival of which the dramatic performances formed a part. The presence of animals, their flowing blood and the smoke of roasting fires, on an extraordinary scale, must all have lent

[69] Undying: Seaford *ad loc.* makes the good point that *athanatos* "immortal" suggests not only what the flame is or what its character, but its transitive power, what it does, its agency: "this adjective connotes its power to immortalise (both Dionysus and Semelē . . ."

[70] Dodds, 1960, ad loc.

[71] For an apparent reference to a statue of Dionysus in the theatre, see Ar. *Eq.* 536 and § 3.2.2 n. 77.

the *Megala Dionysia* a peculiar intensity, and fixed in it a very strong identity in the memories of the citizenry[72]. If we have any doubt, and we really ought not to, about the significance of this flame on the *ereipia tuphomena*, "smouldering ruins", of Semelē's house – *oikos, domos* – we may recall that it will come up again, at moments of great intensity. It is not a passive, inert object in the stage décor.

In the midst of the play's action, in the so-called "Palace Epiphany Scene" of the third episode, Dionysus has been locked up inside the palace compound of Pentheus. He remains ever master of the situation, causing the very earth to tremble and the palace of Pentheus to reel[73]. The Stranger will come out unharmed and perfectly in command to re-assure his dismayed bacchants. He calls out to them from within the palace to "light the shining lightning-torch", *keraunion lampada*. We must assume that this is a torch to be kindled from the "still living flame of fire", which burns in the smouldering ruins where Semelē was destroyed involuntarily by Zeus Keraunios, (in an act, which is volitionally an *ergon mikton*, as is typical of Tragic acts). That same flame of Zeus' thunder-bolt kindled into life the divine person, Dionysus, 594-5[74]:

> Δι. ἅπτε κεραύνιον αἴθοπα λαμπάδα,
> σύμφλεγε σύμφλεγε δώματα Πενθέος. 595
>
> Kindle the shining lightning torch,
> burn down, burn down Pentheus' house.

"Lightning torch", *keraunion lampada*, is arresting. The flame on the tomb is the still-living descendant of the original heavenly flame, which has the power or quality in its instantaneous presence, to engender further fire. The fire is a progeny and trace of its divine parent, *Zeus Lightning*, just as Dionysus, who has come to vindicate his mother and assert his heavenly paternity, the truth of his descent from the original flame, is a god who *kindles* those in his proximity[75]. The *thiasos*, the choral throng of bacchants, leaves us in no doubt what this fire is, which must be used to set on fire the house of the king *inadvertently* at war

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[72] Hall in Stuttard: 19-20, "There were, in addition, hundreds of lesser sacrifices; the sanctuary of Dionysus must have resembled a massive sunlit abattoir attached to a barbecue.", 20.

[73] On the scene of "Palace Wonders", see Gakopolou, 2011.

[74] Cf. Pi. fr. 70b 15-17 [Snell]: ἐν δ' ὁ παγκρατὴς κεραυνὸς ἀμπνέων / πῦρ κεκίνη[ται τό τ'] Ἐνυαλίου/ ἔγχος, ἀλκάεσσά [τ]ε Παλλάδο[ς] αἰγίς/μυρίων φθογγάζεται κλαγγαῖς δρακόντων. Roux ad loc.: "Dionysos, mis au monde sous l'effet de la foudre, est considéré, rappelle Dodds, comme le 'Master of the Lightning'", see Dodds' extensive discussion at 6-12 .

[75] And Pentheus fears that the city will "catch fire" 778-9; see also 624-6 for Pentheus' wild efforts to have put out a fire that is not there and note Dodds' comments on 625-6 "*matēn ponōn*, since the house was *not* on fire". Similarly, thunder is an index of lightning, as *Dionysos Bromios* "Thunderer, roarer", is a trace of Zeus, present through him.

with a god, *theomachōn*[76]. It is the flame which Zeus "left behind", *elipe*. "Don't you see it?" they call out, (corresponding to the earlier "I am seeing" of Dionysus at 6), 595-599:

Χο. ἆ ἆ,
πῦρ οὐ λεύσσεις, οὐδ' αὐγάζηι[77] 596
<τόνδε> Σεμέλας ἱερὸν ἀμφὶ τάφον
ἅν ποτε κεραυνοβόλος ἔλιπε φλόγα
Διὸς βροντά;[78]

Ah, ah,
Don't you see the fire, or discern the light
around the divine tomb of Semelē
which once the lightning-shooting thunder

[76] *Theomachein*: see § 2.5 p. 80 n. 273.

[77] *Augazesthai*, 596: this middle does not occur elsewhere in Tragedy. Roux: "'ne vois-tu pas dans une claire lumière?' (αὐγή). Ce verbe répète, à une nuance près, le sens du premier; mais les répétitions sont nombreuses dans ce passage où l'émotion est portée à son comble (577, 579, 582, 595, 600.". Dodds, Rijksbaron and Seaford all concur that it is deployed here (on the analogy of the use of *idesthai* alongside *horān*, at Eur. *Hel.* 122, *IA* 295, 299) to convey that the subject "has a special interest in what he sees." Rijksbaron ad loc. It can mean "view in the clearest light, see distinctly, discern", *s.v. LSJ* and in the passive "be mirrored", "simply appear". The Septuagint "appear bright", "shine", in the New Testament, "'enlighten', 2 Ep.Cor.4.4; 'set in a clear light', Ph.1.659,al.". *LSJ* takes the use here at 596 as passive and offers alongside it use of the sun "illumine" at Eur. *Hec.* 637. What is most significant is the ambiguity in sight between transitivity and intransitivity. Sight here is not mere "registering" but given an emphatic and differentiated character, as it is throughout the play. Subjects are "involved" through the act of seeing and their motives and interests are caught up in the manner of their seeing. In the phenomenon of sight we discern the passive dimension of an act and the active dimension of something experienced, perceived.

[78] Di Bendetto, as often, is the commentator most persuasive on these lines and those at 6-9, with their connected imagery of the flame of Semelē. At Di Benedetto p. 388, on 596-600 (b): "L'insistenza con cui sollecita l'atto del guardare dimostra che si trattava di un qualcosa che gli spettatori vedevano. Non doveva del resto essere difficile ravvivare la fiamma e provocare una vampata: tanto più che chi compiva questa operazione poteva agire con tranquillità senza essere visto degli spettatori"; he thinks the person on stage causing this flame to blaze up would have been hidden by that hedge of vines that Dionysus had told us he had used to dress his mother's tomb at 11-12. It is not, however, the case of the same literal presence of what Pentheus sees, his toppling house: "La spiegazione mi pare debbe essere questa, che cioè lo scuotimento degli architravi dovesse essere inteso come una cosa reale, ma esso non veniva visto dagli spettatori." His note is extensive and he gives good grounds for rejecting Roux's interpretation of the scene. Roux does not make much of the fire and is surprisingly literal in her reading of these strange events and their import, e.g. ad loc. "Euripide confond ici deux monuments qui, au temps de Pausanias (IX, 16, 7), étaient distincts"; Pausanias did live half a millennium after *Bacchae* was written. Contrast Seaford's handling of the question of fire, he is guided in his interest in showing a supposed telestic subtext throughout the work, not in the flame as trace, or in the inferential logic of abduction and its role in the question of evidence of divinity, as I am. He does raise the relevant issue of 'seeing what is not there': "As for staging, many have tried to answer the unanswerable questions 'Did Eur. intend the stage palace to be seen to collapse? or suffer some damage? or no damage or Semele's tomb to be seen to flare up . . . I suppose that the thiasos' evocation of thunder and earthquake destroying the royal building predated tragedy, and so did not *require* stage buildings (though with their advent some stage effect may have been devised, perhaps to suggest something happening behind the front (courtyard) wall. After all, characteristic of the adherent of D. is to see things which others do not see (918-24)." Seaford: p. 198. See also for a theoretical discussion Goldhill 1986, 277-84 and the response of Wiles, 1987. In the context of theatre where sight is so manipulated and problematized and in which hearing also takes on an at least equivalent epistemic power, we are in a context, whatever the case may be concerning the staging or realization of any given effects at any given moments, of the 'beneficial crisis' of inference, the healthy ambiguity through which performed, made-up, *plastos pathos* becomes real *mathos*.

of Zeus left behind?

When Dionysus does emerge from the palace it will be to explain the fearful prodigies to the "Foreign women, so struck with fear", 604. While inside the palace a baffled Pentheus was pursuing phantoms, "Bacchos" super-naturally causes the place to shake and the flame, as if sentient, corresponds to this high excitement, 622-4:

ἐν δὲ τῶιδε τῶι χρόνωι
ἀνετίναξ' ἐλθὼν ὁ Βάκχος δῶμα καὶ μητρὸς τάφωι
πῦρ ἀνῆψ'·

and during this time
Bacchos came and shook the house and on mother's tomb
the fire flared up (*anēps'*)[79].

The still living flame in the smoking ruins, now the taboo precinct – *abaton sēkon* – of Semelē's tomb set apart by Kadmos[80], is just such a case "where we find some very curious circumstances, which would be explained by the supposition that it was a case of some general rule"[81]. A general rule which we might adopt if, unlike Pentheus and his family, we "knew how to be of healthy mind", might run as follows: the gods *do* enter into this mundane, mortal world, they *do* forge connections with mortals and *do* comprise a part of the intensely social world of humans and not only a remote perspective on it. They are involved, not a "view from nowhere." As well as being remote, like the rules of *langue* standing apparently above the incidents of *parole*, they are at hand potentially, like our co-present mortal actors. It were well to live as if we are going to die and as if there are persons moving through the world who are not what they seem.

Lightning 'betokens' Zeus' presence but, paradoxically, the remnants of the flame here "living" on Semelē's tomb invite us not merely to deduce that "Zeus was here", but to abduct the *capacity* of mortals to become bound to divinity and further engender god-like persons or person-like gods. We abduct this because we are compelled to follow all Dionysus' assertions – his movements through *x* and *z* – and make an imaginative leap about the nature of those movements. Zeus, Lightning, has not just "happened" here. His flame lives still and traces a set of "actions", the acts of a person, not the happenings behind

[79] Flared up: *anaptein* denotes "light up", "kindle", fire like hair is made of threads, has a similar form and *anaptein* has for principal meaning "fasten", "bind", "attach", "hang up".

[80] 10-11.

[81] See § 5.2.4 p. 299, Gell, 1998: 14.

which stands no person. There has been here a series of intentions, desires and initiated acts by actors in social (intentional, mutual, recursive, will-manifesting) relations, not merely arbitrary relations of contingent circumstance.

Dionysus, incarnate and present, moving embodied amongst the Thebans, underwrites and vindicates the abductive reading of the fire. Where there is smoke, we say proverbially, there is fire. We trace intentions behind events, read things and circumstances as evidence. Here, where there is fire, there has come into being and is present the body of that god born from fire, whose mother was destroyed by a lightning-strike, the motive behind which has been diversely read[82]. There is present here that class of being, a god, which thrives on the smoke of sacrifices offered by humans on their "smoking altars", *thusia*[83]. This flame and this "smoke", which is the nebulous personhood, the divine identity of Dionysus, is itself the trace of the congress between mortality and immortality, from which in this drama we are expected to abduct the present agency – natural and super-natural – which Pentheus will fail to detect[84].

The "causal inference" which any given actor makes about the fire is decisive in *Bacchae*. The sisters of Semelē had inferred that her incendiary death had been punishment for having "lied", *epseusato,* about relations with Zeus. On the too realistic, too discrediting premise that fellow humans have only the most recognizable motives and strategies, they deduce that their sister was promiscuous and in her attempt to cover-up her "sexual error", impious to boot 26-31[85]:

> ἐπεί μ' ἀδελφαὶ μητρός, ἃς ἥκιστ' ἐχρῆν,
> Διόνυσον οὐκ ἔφασκον ἐκφῦναι Διός,
> Σεμέλην δὲ νυμφευθεῖσαν ἐκ θνητοῦ τινος
> ἐς Ζῆν' ἀναφέρειν τὴν ἁμαρτίαν λέχους,

[82] Her sisters and Pentheus say it was Zeus' revenge for her thrasonical, blasphemous behaviour, for Actaeon-like boasting; Dionysus, Teiresias, the bacchants and perhaps the Kadmos who consecrated the debris (ἄβατον ὃς πέδον τόδε/ τίθησι, θυγατρὸς σηκόν·, 10-11) say that it was an involuntary act by Zeus deceived into destroying his own lover.

[83] Hom. *Il.* 8.48, 23.148, *Od.* 8.363; Hes. *Theog*. 557.

[84] For the divinity not only of Dionysus but also of Semelē see Hes. *Theog*. 940-2; and in Pindar Pi. *Ol.* 2. 25-7, where Semelē "died amid the roar of thunder / but she lives on among the Olympian gods . . ."; at Pi. *Pyth.* 11.1 she is "neighbour of Olympian goddesses" Σεμέλα μὲν Ὀλυμπιάδων ἀγυιᾶτι; at Pi. *Pyth*. 3.99 one of the only consolations in Kadmos' long and often unfortunate life is that Zeus had made his way to his daughter's desirable bed, (trans. Verity, 2007).

[85] This reading is put on things by Pentheus too, see 242-47. Cf. Edith Hall on the thread that runs through all three of the tragedies of the trilogy performed in 405 BCE "The issue of cognitive confusion certainly ran through the tragedies. . . . in Bacchae, of course, failure to apprehend reality accurately, epitomized in Pentheus' failure to recognize Dionysus physically, a concrete reiteration of the denial of Dionysus' godhead by Semele's sisters which had stimulated the action of the tragedy in the first place, is a major structuring motif . . . The fundamental question asked by epistemology – how do we know what we know – seems to have underpinned the play's metaphysical signification.", Hall in Stuttard: 21.

Κάδμου σοφίσμαθ', ὧν νιν οὕνεκα κτανεῖν
Ζῆν' ἐξεκαυχῶνθ', ὅτι γάμους ἐψεύσατο.

Because my mother's sisters, who least ought to have,
Claimed that Dionysus was not sprung from Zeus,
And that Semelē having lain with some mortal
Ascribed her sexual error to Zeus,
That it was Kadmos' clever scheme, and that's why Zeus killed her
Blasting her as lightning, because she had lied about their union.

Dionysus in his prologue wants the audience not to deduce what the flame signifies, not on the basis of a pre-established notion to conclude what it means,[86] but to *abduct*, from the flame to infer the special, ad hoc rule of the community and even the hybridity of mortal and immortal. Just as Dionysus is too human in his passion, so in humans (since abduction is a "tentative and hazardous tracing"), there is something of the divine, some quality of intentionality that does transcend[87]. His presence and subsequent actions will guarantee or make credible the truth of this inference that we are to make from this flame. It is the trace not only of Zeus' agency but of the human Semelē's effective, if inadvertent, part in the conception and production of this god[88].

It is not disputed that Semelē was destroyed by Zeus' fire, the lightning strike, but the meaning or intention behind this fiery death and therefore the possibilities of its outcome

[86] For example, that "it is evidence of divine punishment for the usual human vices"; "it is a mark of the natural contingency of events, [here of meteorological phenomena]"; or even that "it is the stage effect that someone has placed there".

[87] 1348: ὀργὰς πρέπει θεοὺς οὐχ ὁμοιοῦσθαι βροτοῖς. Dionysus' too human *orgē* contrasts with the human potential for *nóos theoudēs,* the great danger in and for the complex social entanglement of the *polis* is the citizen who becomes too unaware of self, not self-reflexive, acting solipsistically, like one with no *nóos* (270-1: θράσει δὲ δυνατὸς καὶ λέγειν οἷός τ' ἀνὴρ/ κακὸς πολίτης γίγνεται νοῦν οὐκ ἔχων.). Cf. Deichgräber, 1952: "Tragisches Erlebnis der Menschen ist keine leicht verhüllte Götterkritik. Der Mensch soll un muß sich an Maßstäbe halten. Die Götter brauchen es nicht. Dort die Welt des leichten Spiels, hier die Welt des schweren Leids.". He is writing here specifically of Homer and his world, we might say of Dionysus in *Bacchae* that he is not entirely light, his own desire matters to him and the honour of his mother, which he has come to defend, *apologēsasthai* 41. It is a "Spiel" in *Bacchae*, but not entirely "leicht".

[88] Production of gods: that the coming into being, the being made or born, quality of divinities is an important theme in *Bacchae* is patent. Dionysus' strange hybridity, uniting *technē* and *physis*, is much referred to; see esp. 88-98, 288-97. He is a *neochma* as Pentheus contemptuously refers to the new Dionysiac menace about (κλύω δὲ νεοχμὰ τήνδ' ἀνὰ πτόλιν κακά 216). Is there a "Zeus [in barbarous Asia] who gives birth to new gods?" (Ζεὺς δ' ἔστ' ἐκεῖ τις ὃς νέους τίκτει θεούς; 467), asks Pentheus in the same spirit. Unlike the almost entirely invisible god of the Hebrews [but cf. Exodus 33.12-34.9, where Moses is a kind of Semelē / Thebes asking to see God and God offers to pass by before the eyes of Moses so that he will be seen, but only from behind] the multifariously visualized gods of the Greeks have come into being, been born. *Theogonia*, the birth of the gods, is not an idea that monotheists might comfortably integrate into their cosmological schemas. Behind birth and fabrication there lie prior intentions and inadvertencies. What was the first intentionality? The question for the Greeks is not so much the uniqueness and omnipotency of an original agency but that agency *per se* by which an original and perhaps only ever temporarily suppressed chaos (the unbearable absence of any ordering intentionality), was first overcome. That agency is a quality of which humans, even if in a compromised and all too weakened and ephemeral way, partake.

(i.e. the veracity of Dionysus' claims to legitimacy), are what remain at issue[89]. The world is full of evidence of events and unexplained phenomena. The danger for humans, habitual interpreters that they are, with their insuperable need to establish orders of explanation and deny the possibility of meaningless chaos[90], is finding, discerning, judging or choosing the correct explanation of the will or agency that motivates given events.

At the opening of *Bacchae* the Thebans have deduced and bet. To "bet" here means to show a deficit in spontaneous feeling, to calculate and anticipate (bet on) also calculation and stastical probabilities in others, to be faithlessly disposed. They have bet on human rather than divine agency: intelligible, probable, ordinary and typically in the order of comprehensible human desiring. *Bacchae* will be the story of this "bet" on human agency, which is disastrously lost by human agents, and of the insufficiency of "betting" (both strategizing and the assumption that there is ever "value-free" perception). This wager was itself a wager – though not a consciously expressed or reflective one – on the optimum kind of strategy in dealing with others and, in this case with this strange, new, foreign god who brings the uncanny into the banausic and banal theatre of life in the *polis*. Dionysus can only be perceived and received, but not conceived; the drama of his arrival at Thebes and the subsequent events show that what is most important to him is an emotional bearing. The re-orientation he requires is both a sign of health and a reproducer of the cognitive, social and emotional well-being which is the gift – the opposite of a *dolos* – he wants mortals to receive from him.

The flame that dances on Semelē's tomb is an index of divine desire, of divine agency and of its erotic, social and productive entanglement with the human world. It is not, therefore, an index of divine remoteness and the assertion of difference, but the trace of the communion of mortal and immortal, which Dionysus will incarnate. Humans are by definition not divine. Gods are deathless, but in uncanny ways – best exemplified in the timeless touch, *hapsis*, of the lightning strike, which binds earth and *aithēr* – the two kinds come

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[89] Semelē loses her life, *aiōn,* by Zeus' lightning blow, κεραυνίωι πλαγᾶι, and Dionysus is born from his mother's womb. So much is clear to the bacchants, *Ba*. 88-93. And equally to Teiresias, who tells how it is (διδάξω σ' ὡς καλῶς ἔχει τόδε, 287) and speaks of a Dionysus snatched from the fire by Zeus, 288-89: ἐπεί νιν ἥρπασ' ἐκ πυρὸς κεραυνίου / Ζεύς. Birth from a burning body: cf. Asclepius born and taken from Coronis' body after she was killed by Artemis and Apollo's plague Pi. *Pyth*. 3.1-23; Apollo snatches his unborn child, Asclepius, from his pregnant mother's funeral pyre, Pi. *Pyth*. 3.40-44. It is a poem (by the Theban Pindar) with much of interest for the House of Kadmos. Kadmos' fate was such as is typical of the mortal's generally: an uncertain, slippery existence (αἰὼν δ' ἀσφαλής/οὐκ ἔγεντ' Pi. *Pyth*. 3.86-7); one of his few consolations is that Zeus found his way to the desirable bed of the king's daughter Semelē also called Thyonē, bringing his family name the honour of a a divine grandson, Pi. *Pyth.* 3.99: ἤλυθεν ἐς λέχος ἱμερτὸν Θυώνα. Kadmos' existence, like Oedipus', would be marked by great highs and great lows, never done being done until like Oedipus, he would be received amongst the blessed, 1339. Cf. Solon's great description of the uncertainty of human fate, while a person still lives being always still subject to contingency and fortune, Hdt. 1.32.

[90] See Geertz, 1973 and Gould, 2001: 203-34, and § 4.3.6 on predicting highest levels of organization.

dramatically into contact. The transcendent, immaterial and the vital, material are bound together or entangled in a dynamic, never settled dialectic.

Dionysus the immortal god walks and talks amongst humans, as a human; and divine timelessness is seen to improbably penetrate the mortal, historical mode of being. How time-bound humans should know, recognize, communicate with or come in contact with timeless beings is a problem for humans in whom has always been rooted such an irreducible religious instinct, an instinct to have social relations with divine persons. This is a riddle expressed in various permutations through different episodes in the composite *bios* we draw together for Dionysus. The fiery person of Dionysus, child of the momentary contact of sky and earth, is himself an incandescent thread binding the society of human persons with the society of ahistorical divine beings. The god Dionysus is a special person but also a social person. He requires special modes of relation adapted to his incommensurability. The fire of mind, which seems to distinguish humans from all other animals, is inoperative or it blazes up in his proximity. Not ingenuity, stratagem or forward planning but knowledge as *relation*, as the end in itself, the right bearing, a social and affective posture alone, will suffice for this god who annuls the most basic laws of cause and effect, identity and permanence: continuously in turn human and divine, gentle and full of terror, a destroyer and the greatest benefactor of mortals.

5.4 Bacchic Hair

τῶι θεῶι δ' αὐτὸν τρέφω[91]

Human hair is a kind of index, which allows for the abduction of uniquely human agency and self-consciousness. Alternatively, it can be the evidence of no agency, an absence of self-reflexive personhood, which would be the evidence of a social sense of self , *aidōs*. The wild hair of the bacchants is an index of their mindlessness, just as the flowing hair of the Achaean warrior is an index of an intentional person in impressive full-flight – in a state of *frenzied purposiveness* – towards his conscious, pre-articulated goal. From the Iliadic hero's hair we may infer the state of fullest agency, as he makes his way in all his physical and emotional splendour towards the enemy and his *telos* which is renown, *kleos*.

In *Bacchae* a lock of flame dances on a tomb and does not burn out, and elsewhere flame is seen to dance miraculously on the heads of bacchants without burning them[92]. Locks of hair set on graves serving as traces of the presence of agents is something of a trope in Greek drama. It is one that Euripides has exploited and even ridiculed elsewhere[93]. In *Bacchae* hair provides occasions for misprision. In the complex hunting and tracking down – *ichneuein* – that takes place at Thebes, hair is a spoor misidentified, connected with which comes typically the misattribution of agency or non-inference of person.

Ivy and vine – plants most hair-like, *trichina*, curling, *helikes* – always so strongly associated with Dionysus, are regularly evoked in *Bacchae*. From the opening lines we hear that he has dressed his mother's tomb in his plant, an act of dignification or veneration, opening his

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[91] "I nurture it for the god", 494.

[92] 757-8: ἐπὶ δὲ βοστρύχοις/πῦρ ἔφερον, οὐδ' ἔκαιεν.

[93] See Aesch. *Cho.* 170-72, 225-230 Soph. *El.* 446-52, 900-903. In Euripides the reliable trace of presence is not that at all, it is unrealistic to infer too much from this kind of spoor, according to the world-wary Electra, Eur. *El.* 520-537. It is a play in which there is much asking about how to judge authentic identity. The cynical figure of Orestes despairs that one can discern the true value and nature of other persons, Eur. *El.* 367-90. There is a truly remarkable chastizement of the Athenian audience, in which again we see how important strong and noble judgement is to the poet, Eur. *El.* 383-5: οὐ μὴ ἀφρονήσεθ', οἳ κενῶν δοξασμάτων/ πλήρεις πλανᾶσθε, τῆι δ' ὁμιλίαι βροτῶν/ κρινεῖτε καὶ τοῖς ἤθεσιν τοὺς εὐγενεῖς; Eventually he declares that Apollo's prophecies are "steadfast" but human divinatory reading he can do without, Eur. *El.* 399-400: Λοξίου γὰρ ἔμπεδοι / χρησμοί, βροτῶν δὲ μαντικὴν χαίρειν ἐῶ. What kind of signs identify persons and can be used to make strong inferences is a fundamental problem of the play with its homecoming son disguised, who needs to be recognized by his kin but also remain concealed until the right moment. Echoing the famous scar of the disguised homecomer, Odysseus, recognized by the old servant Eurykleia (see Hom. *Od.* 19. 386-502 and Auerbach's famous essay, which still repays study, in Auerbach, 1953), Electra is persuaded by a local old man to rely upon the proof of an old scar above Orestes' eye to detect his identity. He got it when he fell once chasing that beast whose body becomes the sign of the bacchant, a fawn, *nebros*, 572-4: El. ποῖον χαρακτῆρ' εἰσιδών, ὦι πείσομαι;/ Old Man: οὐλὴν παρ' ὀφρύν, ἣν ποτ' ἐν πατρὸς δόμοις/ νεβρὸν διώκων σοῦ μέθ' ἡιμάχθη πεσών.

drama of self-vindication[94]. He has laid his abundant vegetable hair on his mother's grave, marking his presence and her erstwhile presence. He re-invests the smouldering ruins with fresh, vital life. Contrast that vivid image of Dionysiac homage with the scene after Pentheus' death when Agauē, carrying her unrecognized son's head, the head of a now absent person, refers to it as a "freshly cut tendril"[95]. In a similar way, soon after, she refers to Pentheus, now the trophy of her "blessed hunting", as a "young bullock, newly sprouting down under its soft-haired crest"[96].

Hair and the head, animal and human, dressed or undressed, receive much attention in *Bacchae*. The quality of human hair as being a most prominent and symbolically loaded part or emission of the body, suggests that it will repay our interpretive attentions. It is definitively a thing of *phusis*, "springing", "shooting" – *phuein* – as it does from the flesh at the most culturally dense points of the human frame: head, face (mouth, eyes), pudenda. It distinguishes persons along the most significant social and cultural lines: gender, age, ethnicity, and (in its treatment or non-treatment) class. In this paradoxical way, this substance which is literally a *phusis* stuff – the vegetable growth of the human body – is definitively *also* a thing of *nomos*.

A vegetable substance, hair is more amenable to the formative intentions, more *plastic*, "shapeable", than any other part of the body. Of the body's parts hair is most "always coming out", externalized, most natural or spontaneous, least subject to human wish: born with straight hair you cannot cause yourself to grow curls; if you lose your hair you cannot, wish as you may, cause your hair to regrow; if no beard sprouts or if hair "insists" on springing up where one would rather it did not, one has only recourse to technique, tools, prosthetics. Immanent and eminent, it belongs uniquely to a body but is also separable – a ritually most useful exuvium. As such human hair is always taken and made to indicate something about the intangible contents inside the given human person.

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[94] 11-12: ἀμπέλου δέ νιν/ πέριξ ἐγὼ 'κάλυψα βοτρυώδει χλόηι.

[95] 1169-71: φέρομεν ἐξ ὀρέων / ἕλικα νεότομον ἐπὶ μέλαθρα, / μακαρίαν θήραν.

[96] 1185-7: νέος ὁ μόσχος ἄρ- / τι γένυν ὑπὸ κόρυθ' ἁπαλότριχα/ κατάκομον θάλλει. This is evocative of the scene at 927-9 where Dionysus calls attention to a lock of Pentheus that has fallen out of place. That luminous detail has always struck me as showing a very sure poetic hand in its economic suggestiveness. Reading it one may recall Burkert in "Greek Tragedy & Sacrificial Ritual", 1966: 108, describing the procedure of animal sacrifice, "There is still a last delay: the ἱερεύς cuts off a few hairs from the victim's forehead and throws them in the fire. With extraordinary obstinacy, scholars have looked for daemons who demanded hair, though the Greek expression again is both clear and simple: this, too, is ἄρχεσθαι, the beginning. The first cut does no harm, does not yet draw blood, but the victim is no longer physically inviolate. This step is irreversible."; see exactly such a ritual killing of a *moschos* by Aegisthus narrated by a messenger in Euripides' *Electra* 810-14.

It is no surprise then, that hair receives the prominence it does around the god repeatedly referred to by his appearance and his abundant head of hair[97]. Dionysus has himself undergone a 'make-over' in the late 5th Century: he no longer has the white hair of the Olympian senior but the dark full head of the ephebe; he no longer has the long beard from which we automatically infer a certain station in social life, but is a beardless ephebe[98]. It can be no surprise, then, that Pentheus' first act against the Stranger would be to cut off his hair, which the god inside the man's form impassively explains, he "nurtures", "keeps" for the god, 492-4[99]. It makes sense too that the *Baccheus* inciting the bacchants with shouts, running and dancing, is said to "fling his soft hair into the *aithēr*", that domain that Dionysus incarnate links with this domain of earthly existence *gē*, *chthōn*[100] 150: τρυφερόν <τε> πλόκαμον εἰς αἰθέρα ῥίπτων.

Here let it suffice to have invoked the theme of hair and to suggest that it is a 'vital matter' having the indexical character of the smile[101]. In *Bacchae* hair manifests an absent agency, a vacancy of mind where there ought to be social self-consciousness, in the absence of its dressing, its unbound looseness. This is conveyed with no little delicacy in the penultimate episode. Pentheus, now fallen into the "light frenzy", has emerged from the house transformed into a bacchant, he is asking how he looks, Dionysus approves, but must help him with a lock of hair that has fallen out of place, 928-9:

> ἀλλ' ἐξ ἕδρας σοι πλόκαμος ἐξέστηχ' ὅδε,
> οὐχ ὡς ἐγώ νιν ὑπὸ μίτραι καθήρμοσα.
>
> But a lock of your hair is out of place here,
> Not as I fixed it under the snood.

Hair is a natural sign, which humans are naturals at reading. Yet, it is also coverable (with a snood, *mitra*), falsifiable (donning a wig or mask). It is powerfully connected both to to natural gender and biological process and also to impersonation[102]. It is a fundamental element in the suite of indexes by which we infer person and the social identity of persons. It

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[97] Cf. the youthful figure of Dionysus from the Parthenon frieze, see also Carpenter in *Masks*: 185.

[98] On the "beardless Dionysus" see Carpenter in *Masks*: 185-206; Carpenter, 1997.

[99] See § 2.2.5 pp. 87-8 for text and translation.

[100] τήνδε Θηβαίαν χθόνα, 1; the bacchant's air flies in the *aithēr*, it feet and thyrsos dance over the earth: θύρσωι κροτῶν γῆν, 188. Demeter is *Gē* and Dionysus is the substance which flows or is caused to flow over *gē*, 274-83, 142-3.

[101] On "vital matter" see Hodder, 2014.

[102] See also for this theme the nearly exactly contemporary Aristophanes' *Frogs* (Lenaea 405 BCE, performed only months before *Bacchae*) and also that other great comedy which brought Euripides onstage again, with its themes of concealment and men as transvestite impostors: *Thesmophoriazusae*.

embodies the tension between the arisen and spontaneous on the one hand and the shaped, intentional and synthetic on the other. Dionysus' person, as it is represented in *Bacchae* itself, personifies this enigmatic dialectic and the tendency for one mode to become the other, for the natural to be revealed as intentional and the normal as becoming the natural.

5.5 *Gelān*: Laughter in *Bacchae*

5.5.1 A Smirking Man

Kadmos fears that he is acting in a manner undignified, that "someone" may think that he is not properly mindful of his age, οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι "unashamed", in wreathing his head with ivy and intending to dance, 204-5:

> ἐρεῖ τις ὡς τὸ γῆρας οὐκ αἰσχύνομαι,
> μέλλων χορεύειν κρᾶτα κισσώσας ἐμόν;[103]
>
> Won't someone say that I have no shame for my old age
> Meaning to dance and dressing my head with ivy?

When Pentheus first detects the two old men (he has arrived on the scene from abroad, *ekdēmos* 215, speaking for some while as if unaware of the presence of others 215-47), it *is* as "ridiculous", "ludicrous" that he sees them; the import of this laughable situation is shameful, πολὺν γέλων 250[104]. Ridiculousness and laughableness is a matter of contention in

[103] On 'the shame of old participating in Dionysiac song' see Plato *Leges* 665d-e. For the shamlessness of old age, 251-2: ἀναίνομαι, πάτερ, τὸ γῆρας ὑμῶν εἰσορῶν νοῦν οὐκ ἔχον. See also Eur. *Alc.* 727 φεῦ φεῦ· τὸ γῆρας ὡς ἀναιδείας πλέων.

[104] What is laughter doing on the Tragic stage, what is the significance of Thersites' buffoonery in that font of Tragedy the *Iliad* (*Il.* 2. 211-77), where ordinarily only Olympus rings with laughter and earth with groans, wailing, talk and song? The Theatre of Dionysus does ring with laughter and with mournful shrieks during dramatic festivals at which dithyrambs were performed, comedies, tragic drama and satyr plays. Socrates thought the writing of comedy and drama required the same qualities in an author and "the true tragic poet was a comic poet also", Pl. *Sym.* 223d 3-6: προσαναγκάζειν τὸν Σωκράτη ὁμολογεῖν αὐτοὺς τοῦ αὐτοῦ ἀνδρὸς εἶναι κωμῳδίαν καὶ τραγῳδίαν ἐπίστασθαι ποιεῖν, καὶ τὸν τέχνῃ τραγῳδοποιὸν ὄντα <καὶ> κωμῳδοποιὸν εἶναι. Laughter is the blade which, in the social world of *polis,* persons hold over one another's necks, cf. 897-901. Seidensticker, 1982: see esp. 115-25, is a good treatment of the question of comic elements in Greek Tragedy. As he shows, with good bibliography, in the reading of such a scene, (comic or grotesque?) as opens the first episode "ist besonders kontrovers", "stark umstritten" 1982: 115, 117. His reading of *Bacchae* and the laughter of Dionysus there and in his article on comic elements in *Bacchae*, Seidensticker, 1978 is one with whom I concur; see also Taplin, 1986 on the *sunkrisis* of comic and tragic. Scholars like Seaford (1996, 167) argue, implausibly categorical, that there is no humour in *Bacchae* (see Seidensticker, 1982: 115-6 for a list of scholars on either side of the argument). Seaford wants us to see the atmosphere and tone of the first episode as 'not comic but festive': "The easiest way producing the scene is for laughs. But P.'s 'how laughable!' (250) expresses the hostility of the uninitaited (cf. 1080-1, and the Skythians laughing at Bacchic ritual in Hdt. 4.79.4). The mood is not comic but festive, like the festival it prefigures.", Seaford p. 167. Yet we are induced to see characters on the stage from several perspectives, and from Pentheus' they are ridiculous, see also

Bacchae, a question of focalization: "This young[105] god whom you laugh at", Teiresias chides Pentheus: οὗτος δ' ὁ δαίμων ὁ νέος, ὃν σὺ διαγελᾶις 273. In his extensive explanation of Dionysus to the young king (266-326), he uses this intensive form of 'laugh', a full three times[106].

Pentheus has excluded himself from the community experience represented by the mirthful world of the symposium, a world which is powerfully evoked in *Bacchae*, as Halliwell saw[107]. If the *symposion* is evoked in the play, so too is the 'revel', *kōmos*[108]. Pentheus, a young man who has been unwilling to enter the symposiac world (by which is meant chiefly the spirit or tenor of that particular form of community formation), although being "the paradigmatic age for the youthful vigour (*hēbē*) . . . documented as a topos of sympotic texts"[109], will become enchanted by the Stranger and, through this uncanny impressment[110], press-ganged into only another kind of Dionysiac social community, a kind of perverted *kōmos*:

> In the real social world of classical Greek cities, especially Athens, there was one readily recognisable context in which certain men might move through the streets in female or feminised dress. This was precisely a (Dionysiac) *kōmos* . . . So Dionysus'

Morwood in Stuttard: 91-6, on laughter and its meaning in *Bacchae*. I think Halliwell puts it best when he writes on laughter in *Bacchae,* that its quality, what kind of laughter we are confronted with, just like the meaning of the mask, changes over the course of the play, a work marked by its 'thematic intricacy': "The expressiveness of a laughing face (and voice) is equally capable of encompassing ostensible amiability or destructive hostility, yet there is no guaranteed way of reading the difference between the two from the face alone. As the play progresses, we move away from the clear-cut antithesis that structured the chorus' perspective in the first stasimon, and are forced to contemplate the disturbing presence of *both* kinds of laughter within the realm of the Dionysiac itself.", Halliwell, 2008: 137. Dionysus with his theatre is the god of changing perspectives. We must be a little like everyone onstage to enter fully into the emotional world of the drama, an emotional, pathetic world not a doctrinal explication. The complexity and ambiguity of import is a poet's strategy both to manifest and to appeal to the nature and crucial value for persons of import. The appearance of Teiresias and Kadmos after the high Dionysiac emotion of the choral entry hymn is in sharp tonal contrast, precisely because the emotional tenor has the slackened and slackening quality of the faintly absurd, the laughable (see Seidensticker, 1982: 118-20). *Bacchae* – and several of Euripides' other Tragedies – is more mixed, more tonally variegated (*poikilon*) and multi-faceted than the "ritualist" reading of Seaford necessarily allows for. Ridicule and fear of ridicule and the strange proximity of laughter to solemnity is an essential and complex, sophisticatedly handled element of the play.

[105] *Neos* – also "new", "fresh", "odd". For the pejorative use of *neos*: 216, 256, 362, 467. At Rome threats to political stability was quite simply *novae res*, cultures that survive are conservative, those that thrive too are ones that learn how to integrate the new and foreign. On *neos* "the new" in Greek culture, see D'Angour, 2011.

[106] "And do you deride the fact that he was sewn in his father's thigh?" καὶ διαγελᾶις νιν ὡς ἐνερράφη Διὸς/μηρῶι; 286-7; "Myself and Kadmos, whom you laugh at", ἐγὼ μὲν οὖν καὶ Κάδμος, ὃν σὺ διαγελᾶις, 322.

[107] Halliwell, 2008: 133-5. For Dionysus and the *symposion* see Díez-Platas' "The symposiast Dionysos: a god like ourselves" in Bernabé, 2013: 504-25. On Dionysus' figuration in symposiac contexts see Schmitt Pantel in Schlesier: 119-36, "Dionysus, the banquet and gender" and plates XVI-XXII.

[108] See Foley, 1985: 230-1.

[109] Halliwell, 2008: 135.

[110] As those Tyrrhenian sailors of *Hymn. Hom.* 7 had failed to press-gang the god once, for their economic profit.

> plan to lead Pentheus through Thebes in this manner carries pervertedly komastic connotations.[111]

Here is a persuasive argument about what is happening in *Bacchae*. It does not primarily enact a 'perverted sacrifice' or chiefly manifest a wish to allude to sacrificial ritual[112]. Drama shows acts, agency and persons, and persons are social or fail to be healthily social. When sacrifices are perverted or corrupted in Tragedy, that expresses the essential concern with the breakdown in social relationships and the consequences of actions and omissions. That is dramatized in *Bacchae* through the Tragedy of anti-social Pentheus and the corrupted sociality of the Kadmeians[113]. He has not known how to enter in to new forms of community and take on different, new identities. This need not be code for a thwarted *Pubertätsweihung*[114], but the initiatory ritual is the codification of what is being expressed here: healthy people change – they move from being four-legged to two and three. They take on different identities and this changefulness is necessary and authentic, as is not the arresting of identity, which mistakes stasis for permanence and permanence for the good. Pentheus could not change roles voluntarily, which is what social life requires. He did not recognize how complex and intersubjective his world was. He did not willingly enter into renewing, defamliarizing forms of *homilia*, as afforded in the symposiac and komastic contexts, just as he did not recognize that the god was there before him *homartei* – ὁ θεὸς ὁμαρτεῖ, 923[115] – like time transforming him whether he wished or not and seeking to institute relation, establish his identity and identity.

To Halliwell as to Foley before, Euripides has woven "sympotic-komastic elements into the fabric of the drama": laughter is one strand in a "tightly woven texture of imagery" sharing with other strands this fundamental ambiguity. This ambiguousness has become the outstanding, a most discussed quality of the work and its god. In *Bacchae* Euripides has transmuted the "ambiguities of laughter . . . into the material, the motivations and the

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[111] Halliwell, 2008: 139. See also Foley, 1980 and on the *kōmos* motif and the admixture of what Halliwell calls "tragic and 'comic' structures" esp. 117-21.

[112] Much has been written and said about sacrifice and sacrificial patterns and their perversion in Greek poetry, see for example Burkert (1966, 1972) and Vernant (in Detienne & Vernant [edd.] 1979). As often providing a very balanced and judicious perspective on Dionysiac questions, Henrichs in Faraone & Naiden, 2012: 180-93 "Animal sacrifice in Greek Tragedy: ritual, metaphor, problematizations", is very useful. See also Hamerton-Kelly [ed.], 1987 *Violent Origins – Walter Burkert, René Girard, Jonathan Z. Smith on ritual killing and cultural formation.* See also Zeitlin, 1965 "The Motif of the Corrupted Sacrifice in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*" and on the question of sacrifice and *Bacchae*, Seidensticker, 1979.

[113] For the sisters of Semelē, Kadmos, as we have seen, has failed to enter into the spirit of Dionysiac community, a spiritual combination of persons with other persons and with that person which is oneself, *psychan thiaseuein* (75), in the desirable, Dionysiac spirit.

[114] Cf. Seaford, 1981.

[115] There has been an arc by this point, stretching from 43-6, where Dionysus described Pentheus as omitting Dionysus from his prayers and libations, *spondai*, to this moment here, where they are finally *enspondai*, 923-4: ὁ θεὸς ὁμαρτεῖ, πρόσθεν ὢν οὐκ εὐμενής, / ἔνσπονδος ἡμῖν· νῦν δ' ὁρᾶις ἃ χρή σ' ὁρᾶν.

disastrous consequences of tragic conflict"[116]. The poet has caused to overlap most manifestly human and divine laughter, and "super-imposed" joyous laughter with the "bleakest face of tragedy". In the ambiguities of laughter we discern the inherent potentialities to possess and manifest different qualities, different judgements and bearings or to manifest the failure to take appropriate bearings. The nature, the presence or absence and the quality of persons – divine and mortal – are at the centre of *Bacchae* and the problems its protagonists face.

Pentheus, who himself will prove especially sensitive to the dangerous laughter of others (because it is so compromising of social capital, *credibility*) is confronted in *Bacchae* by the infuriatingly slippery, smiling foreigner, Dionysus. In the remarkable transition that Pentheus undergoes in the third episode (787-861), Pentheus is falling under the sway of Dionysus; the disguised god lures Pentheus into the fatal espionage that will precipitate his catastrophic death. Pentheus must disguise himself as a woman. He still shows vestigial resistance, 827-8:

> Di. ἐγὼ στελῶ σε δωμάτων ἔσω μολών.
> Pe. τίνα στολήν; ἦ θῆλυν; ἀλλ' αἰδώς μ' ἔχει.
>
> Di. I will dress you inside the palace.
> Pe. In what dress? A woman's? Embarrassment is taking hold of me.

The description of the suggested bacchic transvestiture and the subsequent emergence from inside the palace of the by now possessed Pentheus, in the outfit of a female bacchant, offer some of the most impressive moments of Greek Classical theatre, unforgettable for their simultaneous strangeness and psychological and situational plausibility. Before the costuming takes place, increasingly subject to this almost mysterious velleity, Pentheus still has the wits to ask how he will avoid the eyes of his fellow Kadmeians, his Theban subjects, 840. Dionysus will lead him and they shall go along empty streets, explains the god: 840-42:

> Pe. καὶ πῶς δι' ἄστεως εἶμι Καδμείους λαθών;
> Di. ὁδοὺς ἐρήμους ἴμεν· ἐγὼ δ' ἡγήσομαι.
> Pe. πᾶν κρεῖσσον ὥστε μὴ 'γγελᾶν βάκχας ἐμοί.
>
> Pe. And how shall I get through the city unseen by the Kadmeians?
> Di. We shall take deserted streets, I myself shall lead.

[116] Halliwell, 2008: 139.

Pe. Anything is better than that the bacchants laugh at me.[117]

Pentheus leaves the stage, now one manifestly bewitched, and enters the palace for his transformation into a ridiculous transvestite figure. Dionysus says plainly to the chorus what is happening: Pentheus "will pay the penalty by dying", θανὼν δώσει δίκην, 847; "We are going to avenge ourselves on him", τεισώμεθ' αὐτόν, 850. This is the moment for "your action, *ergon*", νῦν σὸν ἔργον, says the disguised god apostrophizing his own self, "for you are not far", οὐ γὰρ εἶ πρόσω, he says with now characteristically loaded connotation, 849[118]. Dionysus' *ergon*, then, ("deed, action"), is revenge and this revenge is a two-fold murder. Pentheus will "pay the penalty" literally, by dying at the hands of the maenads, but first figuratively will Dionysus kill him – he will kill him socially. Sustaining the legal imagery of 847, Dionysus declares that he wants him to become liable to the Thebans[119] for laughter *gelōta*, 854-56:

χρήιζω δέ νιν γέλωτα Θηβαίοις ὀφλεῖν
γυναικόμορφον ἀγόμενον δι' ἄστεως
ἐκ τῶν ἀπειλῶν τῶν πρὶν αἷσι δεινὸς ἦν.

I want him to incur laughter to the Thebans
When I lead him through the city in the form of a woman
After his earlier threats, in which he was so scary, *deinos*[120].

The mocking irony in *deinos* 856, shines through all the more brightly in the conclusion of this address, when Dionysus, succinctly summarizing his notorious ambiguity, as both a friend to humans and an awesome divinity, designates *himself* superlatively, *deinotatos*, 859-61[121]:

γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς
Διόνυσον, ὡς πέφυκεν ἐν μέρει θεὸς
δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος.

He will recognize the son of Zeus

[117] 842: The sense seems evident but, editors see here a corruption, the 'blending' of two different expressions Roux: "Il y a ici mélange de deux constructions . . . 'tout est bien pourvu que . . ."; Rijksbaron finds this only "partly correct", but that Roux's offered gloss 'all will be well as long as' covers at least part of this 'contaminated' line. Di Benedetto: "Tutto è meglio piuttosto che essere deriso dalle baccanti."

[118] On apostrophe or prosōpopoiia in *Bacchae* see § 6.1.2 below.

[119] Rijksbaron ad loc.: "Θηβαίοις: *dativus iudicantis*, for a similar usage with ζημίαν ὀφλισκάνει, cf. *Med.* 580-1.".

[120] *Deinos*: This will be a key term for discussion here; I am here rendering "scary" to bring out the sarcasm of the god.

[121] On these lines see also § 7.1.

Dionysus, as a god by turns utterly
Terrible or most gentle to mortals.

No less than Pentheus, of course, Dionysus is preoccupied with *timē*, hyper-sensitive to his standing in the eyes of others, extremely jealous of his honour and that of his closest kin, which must define him. This, after all, has been the pretext for the events of the drama. In this world it is, presumably, an immediately intelligible anxiety and comprehensible motive. At the climax of the play, when Dionysus' revenge is being executed, a voice, "his voice most likely", comes out the air and proclaims to the maenads, 1078-81:

ἐκ δ' αἰθέρος φωνή τις, ὡς μὲν εἰκάσαι
Διόνυσος, ἀνεβόησεν· Ὦ νεάνιδες,
ἄγω τὸν ὑμᾶς κἀμὲ τἀμά τ' ὄργια
γέλων τιθέμενον· ἀλλὰ τιμωρεῖσθέ νιν.

Out of the *aithēr* a voice, as it seemed likely
Dionysus', it shouted out, "Young women,
I bring you the one who makes laughable
Me and your and my *orgia*, now make him pay.

Again, the crux is ridicule, *gelōn tithemenon*, and the redemption of personal value by taking revenge for laughter, for that unpardonable insult, the motivation and bearing, which laughter means to these figures. In this economy of honour where the coin is recognition, the failure of *xenia* to welcome the Stranger in the right spirit, is a thwarted *theoxenia*. It is the incurring of a debt, paid back in kind with the coin of laughter. Thersites too, in *Iliad* 2, must memorably pay for his disrespect to a "god-nurtured king" in an epic setting in which it belongs more to the gods to laugh, than it does to mortals[122]. Humans pay for laughter, for laughter represents a grave danger, a threat to kings and a threat to gods; it is like that touchstone – *basanos* – against which the social currency that persons have accumulated is revealed to be either counterfeit or true, in spite of suspicion and discredit.

[122] Thersites: *Il.* 2. 211-77.

5.5.2 *Polygethes Dionysos*[123]: Bacchic Laughter

The indexical character of the smile is plain. It is a natural sign from which we abduct an emotional state or intentional character. It is one, however, that can be falsified: "smiles may deceive". True, false or ambiguous, a smile is really always indexical; some form of social agency, of 'state of mind' or intention, is always abductable[124]. This is what makes it such a useful model for the explanation of index and of abductive inference generally.

The god of Euripides' *Bacchae* is smiling and his smile is ambiguous. It is, so to speak, the sign of an invisible, unidentified but irrefutable intention. Whatever the quality of intention to which it refers, the smile is evidence of intentionality (or the release from intentionality, which is tantamount to the same thing). Dionysus is not always depicted or described as smiling or laughing in accounts of him[125], so it is all the more significant that in *Bacchae* Euripides presents a laughing Dionysus[126]. He laughs through it all in the play. His is a face the meaning of which is constantly shifting in relation to the shifting of circumstances[127]. Through all, whatever it signifies about the god's bearing, his meaning or intention, the smiling face is the powerful index (this the brilliant stroke of Euripides) of the god's intentionality, his divinely self-assured agency, he who is both by turn "sweetest and most awesome to humans" 861[128].

A redeemer of *face*, (and rebuked for his *cheek)* that very familiar figure of Greek Poetry, the vindicator of his *timē*[129], Dionysus is not only derided and ridiculed (*diagelān*) in *Bacchae*[130], but himself "laughing, smiling", with a very different meaning than is understood by his main interlocutor. This son of Semelē, the chorus chants in the first stasimon (370-433), is the first

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[123] "Joyful Dionysos" see Hom. *Il.* 14.325, Hes. *Erga* 614.

[124] Except in such medical exceptions as involuntary rictus, but just the uncanniness of such instances demonstrates the special character of the smile as natural sign.

[125] Although, cf. *Hom. Hym.* 7. 14-15: ὁ δὲ μειδιάων ἐκάθητο/ὄμμασι κυανέοισι. Seaford on 1021 writes "As here so too in the Dura-Europos graffito it is as γελῶν, laughing, that D. is invoked to make his epiphany."; on pictorial representation of Dionysus laughing or smiling, see Seaford's extensive comments on 439. On tragic masks, see Foley, 1980: 127 n. 32. On Dionysiac imagery, see Carpenter, 1986, 1997 and Dodds xxxiii- xxxvi.

[126] And he more deeply establishes, this powerful work canonizes a certain perspective on the god.

[127] "One mask represents two meanings in a manner that captures the central irony of the dramatic action" Foley, 1980: 128.

[128] Foley's essay "The masque of Dionysus" (Foley, 1980, but also Foley, 1985) is the outstanding discussion on the smiling mask of Dionysus and the inwardness it indexes, but on the subject of "reading" Dionysus and his social agency, mention should be made of the essay by Vernant on the *facialité* peculiar to this god, a very illuminating discussion. On the power of the face, see also Vernant's *La mort dans les yeux,* Vernant 1985, and on the nature and function of mask, a social prosthetic, concealment and depiction of the inner, invisible character, see also Frontisi-Ducroux, 1991, 1995. A recent contribution is Chaston, 2010: esp. 179-238.

[129] 208, 321, 336, 1081.

[130] The god and his followers are ridiculous to Pentheus: Eur. *Ba.* 251,273, 286-7, 322

god among the blessed ones "in merriments, festivities", *euphrosunais* 376[131]. To him it belongs to dance, to "laugh with the flutes", *meta t'auloū gelasai* 380, and to bring an end to worries, 377. It is *gelōn de*, "laughing", with a 'brightness in the face' so to speak, that he surrenders himself to the men sent out by Pentheus to arrest the Stranger, making their office easy, 439-40[132]:

> γελῶν δὲ καὶ δεῖν κἀπάγειν ἐφίετο
> ἔμενέ τε, τοὐμὸν εὐτρεπὲς ποιούμενος.
>
> Laughing he told me to tie him up and lead him away
> And he waited, making himself amenable to my task.

The face is a single aspect, but with a variety of meanings. These are always contingent on the perspective and disposition of the interlocutor or co-present. The inferential strategies of the social actors in his vicinity ("neighbourhood" or "nexus" as Gell would put it) will be decisive. This dynamic diversity, it seems, is integral to the meaning of Dionysus and his natural connection to drama, that complex art of inter-woven and tragically or laughably unconciled perspectives. Dionysus's face, the actor's mask, is "laughing" *prosōpōi gelōnti* 1021[133]. In this instance a more sinister kind of smile, and a different quality of agency, is inferred, 1020-23:

> ἴθ', ὦ Βάκχε, θὴρ ἀγρευτᾶι βακχᾶν
> προσώπωι γελῶντι περίβαλε βρόχον
> θανάσιμον ὑπ' ἀγέλαν πεσόν-
> τι τὰν μαινάδων.
>
> Go Bakkhos, beast
> with laughing face, on the hunter of bacchants
> throw, with smiling face, a deadly
> noose, as he falls under your herd

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[131] Halliwell, 2008: 133 on this line and the symposiac mood evoked in *Bacchae*, from which Pentheus excludes himself "[the bacchants] characterise Dionysus as prime deity of *euphrosunē*, the archetypal mood of the symposium ('first of the gods in the elated celebrations where beautiful garlands are worn', τὸν παρὰ καλλιστεφάνοις εὐφροσύναις: 376-8)."

[132] On γελῶν here, Dodds writes, "the actor who played the Stranger no doubt wore a smiling mask throughout. Cf. 380… It is an ambiguous smile – here the smile of a martyr, afterwards the smile of a destroyer (1021)."

[133] Seaford on 439: "Dionysus is a θὴρ and γελῶν (a striking combination)", a further blurring of classifications to express the sense of spectrum rather than binary opposition, a dynamic continuum between categories – person, god, human, animal, plant, object, matter, non-person, virtual person, person – which invests the work with so much of its vitality and sense of shimmering life.

of maenads.[134]

In an Homeric hymn to Dionysus, we hear it recounted how the glorious son of Semelē appeared on a beachhead[135], like a young man in his very prime[136]. The Tyrrhenian pirates, led by a disastrous fate, see him and abduct him, delighted at heart for they believed they had got hold of the son of one of the "god-fostered kings"[137]. Dionysus sat, "smiling, with dark [unreadable, opaque] eyes", *ommasi kuaneoisi*[138]. That tension of the lips, which is a smile, together "with dark eyes", beautifully conveys the tension inherent in the situation, and something fundamental about Dionysus more generally: a certain tension between bright appearance and opaque, invisible thoughts and hidden points of view. Even in that scene, and all the more so on the Attic stage, there is an interplay of ignorance, scheming and true knowledge, which will become more evidently thematic the more one studies accounts of Dionysus. These situations in which Dionysus finds himself, the configurations of ignorance, false knowledge, partial knowledge (the sailors *do* see that he looks like the son of a god-fostered king), recognition fatally ignored[139], serve to illuminate something peculiar about this god and what he means for humans, their constitution and their social world: when Dionysus comes into human social situations, human knowledge and ordinary social strategies are simply inadequate.

5.5.3 *Gelōs*: Waving or drowning?[140]

Laughter, like fire, is both strange and common. Like fire it is most often sure evidence that there are people together where it is found. A person who laughs in private, like one drinking alone, can be seen as suspicious or unwell: laughter, fire, wine are indexes of the presence of different formations of community. Laughter, like fire, is immaterial, and a trace partaking of both the modes of nature and culture. It manifests the entanglement of mind

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[134]Winnington-Ingram, 1948: 127 "The irony of it will be pleasant to Dionysus, and he will smile, not for the first time. Now at last the meaning of that enigmatic smile with which the 'gentle beast' surrendered to his captors (439) is made clear." Note also the musical emphasis that *gelônti* 1021, receives from *hup' agélan* 1022, in the same position in the following line.

[135] *Hymn. Hom.* 7.2 ἐφάνη.

[136]*Hymn. Hom.* 7.3-4.

[137] *Hymn. Hom.* 7.11.

[138] ὁ δὲ μειδιάων / ἐκάθητο ὄμμασι κυανέοισι, *Hymn. Hom.* 7.14-15.

[139] The *kubernetēs* here *Hymn. Hom.* 7.15-24, like the unheeded messenger of *Bacchae* realizes that they have to do with a god νοήσας *Hymn. Hom.* 7.15.

[140] The famous lines from Stevie Smith's poem "Not waving but drowning", (*Collected Poems of Stevie Smith*, 1972), the first stanza of which runs: "Nobody heard him, the dead man, / But still he lay moaning: / I was much further out than you thought/ And not waving but drowning."

It is a poem and an image which powerfully captures the drama always potentially inherent in the ambiguity of the body's gestures.

and body[141]. For the Greeks *gelōs* was, rather than an independent deity, according to the expert on the subject "something more like a force of nature that could show itself both inside and outside the human world"[142]. The natural, phenomenal quality of laughter is expressed in its strong association, for the Greeks, with "brightness, lustre, or gleaming light". Here one is reminded of 596, where evidence of Dionysus' presence – as his laughter is a trace of whatever motivation it is he conceals within – is perceived as "illumination", "radiance": *augē*[143]. It will come as no surprise then, that the only god with whom are associated fire miracles, this god of manifestations and bright epiphanies, becomes also the god laughing.

Dionysus is the most sensual of gods, in the sense that he is most apprehended through sensual experience[144]: he is noisy (*bromios*), visible (*emphanēs*), tactile (*habros*, *trupheros*), tasted (*hedus* are the liquids he causes to flow: milk, wine, honey 142-3) and sweet-smelling (his miraculous wine[145] or the sweet smoke emitted by the fire that burns when he is by 144-5, Συρίας δ' ὡς λιβάνου κα-/πνὸν). Halliwell argued that the cultural premise of laughter as a natural phenomenon informs something as old as Homer:

> . . . the application of gelastic vocabulary of laughter to large-scale effects of light, sound and even fragrance in the natural world . . . It appears likely (though not certain) that the Greek *gel*- root (*gelōs*: 'laughter'; *gelan*: 'laugh') has an etymological connection with ideas of brightness, lustre or gleaming light, as though the essence of laughter were a kind of vital radiance – an idea not without some physical basis.[146]

Halliwell continues to make the important point that though there be such an association between light and laughter, it is not easy to distinguish this from "the tendency to personify the natural world". It is surely true that the most interesting point about the connection

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[141] The most important and wide-ranging study of "Greek laughter" is Halliwell's 2008 *Greek Laughter: A Study of Cultural Psychology from Homer to Christianity*.

[142] Halliwell, 2008: 13.

[143] See 5.3.3 and p. 315 n. 77 above.

[144] See Hall in Stuttard: 25 ". . . the proof of the existence of god by signs and wonders experienced phenomenologically and sensually rather than through language,". In a related way Henrichs makes a very important point about the significance of the sensuality of Dionysus and his apprehending, "The Greeks themselves never attempted to detach the divinity of Dionysus from his physical manifestations. they believed with Aby Warburg that "god lies in the particulars (der liebe Gott steckt im détail) . . . If it is true that Dionysus was perceived in antiquity essentially as an epiphanic god who revealed himself in concrete physical manifestations, as his myths and images suggest, we need to concentrate recognition, on the encounter of particulars . . . His divine status is inseparable from the ability of his worshippers to recognize him not only in human form, but also behind the particulars of his other manifestations – for instance, his sacred plants or animals, his mythical entourage, or his special gift to mortals, the wine.".

[145] *Hymn. Hom.* 7. 36-7: ἡδύποτος κελάρυζ' εὐώδης, ὥρνυτο δ' ὀδμὴ/ ἀμβροσίη.

[146] In Dionysus – *neos theos* – come together the radiance of light, laughter and the "radiance of the new", on the last of which see D'Angour, 2011: 141-8, discussing the birth of Athena.

between laughter and light is not a possible etymological connection, but what I think is anterior and most telling about human culture and its cognitive character, that is, humans habitually and pervasively discern and attribute person-like qualities in and to phenomena.

Olympus rings with laughter in Homer[147], and humans ought to be cautious lest their laughter, like the smoke of their fires, reach heaven and its jealous inhabitants looking down on the ephemeral upstarts of the earth. Laughter is an uncanny and ambiguous phenomenon, binding individuals together, a mark of happiness, release and catharsis; but also, an expression of aggression, segregating and excluding; or the shudder of *aporia* in the face of absurdity and break-downs in communication or sense. Laughter may be the index of either social health or of hysteria and cognitive breakdown.

A smile, however, may be slightly different. It is the index, when not of assent, positive bearing to a social other or of emotional delight[148], then of something potentially dangerous, sadistic, an anti-social privacy, a concealment of intention or the concealment of the absence of intentionality, something vacuous. A smile is less a spontaneous reflex than laughter is, more nuanced and several in its potential meanings. In Hesiod, Prometheus' "gentle smile" is the index of his opacity, his hidden meaning or intentions. Just as what is best of the slain ox is concealed in the stomach of the animal, and the mere bones, disguised under the gleaming fat[149], so too is hidden the truth of this false figure's intentions, this friend of humans who teaches humankind its crafts and bestows upon it the knowledge and skills necessary for civilized, social life[150]. His smile is a social sign and also the mark of a private purpose, of unrevealed individualistic intent, of all the danger that so often entails in encounters between social actors in Greek poetry.

As the "index of an inner state", of "state of mind[151]" and an almost universal form of voluntary and involuntary communicating, the smile is a physical mark or natural sign with important social consequences. As a sign it is definitively social, as a phenomenon it has

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[147] On the laughter of Homeric gods and men, see Halliwell, 2008: 51-99. Of peculiar pertinence to our study are his remarks at 2008: 13 ". . . when mainstream paganism ascribes laughter to its gods, not least in their Homeric moments of 'unquenchable' laughter, it does so in ways that make the anthropomorphic impetus evident. Yet such depictions leave room for a sense that the natural energies of *gelōs* are not only magnified among the Olympians but *take on something of the incomplete intelligibility of everything associated with the gods* . . . the laughter of the gods both is and is not like that of humans." Henrichs in *Masks*: 33-4 , cites Vernant on Gernet: "'Even in the world of the Olympian gods. . . Even more, *he abolishes the distance that separates the gods from men and men from animals*' . . . in this eloquent statement, Gernet's Other coexists, however precariously, with Otto's polar Dionysus."

[148] Aphrodite is winningly *philommeidēs,* she "loves to smile", "tends to be smiling": Od. 8.362, Il. 3.424, Cypr. Fr.5, Hes. Th. 989;. Sappho 1.11, NB. association in B. with her; *Philomeidēs Dionysos* Stob. 4.23.7.

[149] *Theog*., 536-41.

[150] See Aesch. *PV* 441-71.

[151] Gell, 1998: 20.

originated not out of human minds or practices, apparently, but out of nature and the contingent, phenomenal world that does not rely on humans; it seems absolute of culture. It partakes of this duality that comes into relief in Dionysus' presence: the dialectical relation between natural or spontaneous phenomena on the one hand, and on the other, the interpreting posture of culture, habitually discerning meaning, tracing agency behind events and phenomena, so that they become or are translated as "signs". Much has been written about Dionysus' smiling/ laughing expression referred to several times in *Bacchae*.[152] The mask worn by the thespian playing the Stranger and Dionysus, will have been, judging by the references in the text, the mask of a laughing face: as much as he may be *der kommende Gott*, Dionysus, by the end of the 5th C. is clearly also a *lächelnder* and *lachender Gott*. Laughing or smiling – interpretations diverge[153].

Most interesting about this, once again, is the meaning of the ambiguity here. I think a crucial question is how to represent movement and sound, which by its nature is dynamic and always moving into and out of presence. "Things" do not move but if they seem to feel, to have emotion, as a smile suggests, they may very well be *capable* of moving, and having those internal movements called emotions. A smiling god, idol or mask, may simply be so inclined as not to move just now. The power of the smile is that it always contains inherent within it the potential for ambiguity, it poses a question of motivation, *boulēsis*.

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[152] Foley, 1980, 1985; Vernant, 1985 ; Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant &Vidal-Nacquet, 1986 ; Frontisi-Ducroux, 1995; Chaston, 2010. On Dionysus represented in vase painting as laughing or smiling, see Seaford: 186 on l. 439.

[153]Laugh or smile?: 439: γελῶν δὲ: "smiling": Dodds; Foley, 1985: 218 "We know that the mask of Dionysus was smiling"; Kirk; Grégoire & Meunier, "tout souriant"; Susanetti, "il sorriso sulle labbra"; Stuttard"smiling". 439: "Laughing": Roux, "tout riant"; Von Armin, "lachend"; Guidorizzi, Di Benedetto, "ridendo"; Carson, 2015, "he laughed".

1021: προσώπωι γελῶντι: "smiling" – Dodds; Winnington-Ingram; Foley, 1980; Kirk; Carson, 2015: "with your fatal smile/ your little smile"; Stuttard"with a smile on your sweet lips"; Roux, "souriant"; Grégoire & Meunier, "le sourire aux lèvres"; Susanetti, "con il sorriso sulle labbra"; even Guidorizzi's very muted "con volto sereno". Segal: 249 on line 1021 "your smiling countenance" but later at Segal: 290 "The joyful laughter of the flute in Asiatic worship of the god (380) and the Stranger's imperturbable laughter at his captors (439) now change to the sinister 'laughing' on the face of the hunter-god-beast (1021).". *Gelān* 'laugh' – Von Armin "mit Lachen"; Di Benedetto "col volto ridente"; Seaford "with laughing face". Seaford on 1021 and 439 argues for 'laugh': 439 "γελᾶν often certainly means 'laugh' and never (so far as I know) certainly 'smile'". I think he is quite right to account for the translation 'smile' as an "unconscious memory of *Hymn. Hom.* 7.14", where Dionysus is described as "smiling" ὁ δὲ μειδιάων. Perhaps even more the reason is that readers have remembered the calm, *hesychia*, that has been the mark of the Stranger throughout. *Meidiān* is certainly the word that designates "smile" as opposed to *gelān,* laugh. For thorough discussion with full bibliographical references on this point, see Halliwell, 2008: 13-14 n. 33. See also 136-7 n. 86, Appendix 1: 520-29. Also his earlier 1993 "The function and aesthetics of the Greek tragic mask". The comments on the vocality of laughter versus smiling ("laughter as facio-vocal and smiling as purely facial"), this fact that laughter is sound and smiling 'voiceless' being "without a doubt the basis of the distinction between γελᾶν (laugh) and μειδ(ι)ᾶν (smile)" at Halliwell, 2008 520-1, are particularly relevant. Laughter and smiling naturally "shade into" one another, the relationship between them is "intricate": "there are varieties and gradations of both behaviours, and these *complicate classification* [my emphasis]. In particular, the *visual* impressions of laughing and smiling can be thought of as forming a blurred continuum.", Halliwell, 2008: 520. Translators who render "smile" may be thinking of the actor's mask, a static thing, and the fact that the Stranger does not spend the entire play making "staccato vocalisations", i.e. laughing, but talks and talks calmly.

This ambiguity, so useful if one happens to be an idol[154], is identical to the "usefulness" of the ambiguity of Dionysus' smile in *Bacchae*. How to figure movement and change (laughter as opposed to only smiling) is connected to the problem of how to perceive those entities capable of initiating significant movement and change, persons, and especially of the enhanced mutability of divine persons. In the theatre actors are lending their bodily presence to the more purely imaginary or virtual persons of the poet's imagination, so it would seem that the challenge that faces the plastic artist – how to convey movement – is not relevant. While physical movement is not a problem in theatre, the change in perspective and meaning and how to express that constant shifting is. The diversity of translations of *gelān* at 439 and 1021, is a mark of the dynamic conditions that the poet has succeeded in conveying. Now static and dynamic, animate and inanimate, emotion and tranquillity are not opposites, but form the kind of 'blurred continuum', on which we have been induced to see moving the mortal and immortal, human and animal. Interpretation is a kind of mobilization or dynamizing; it requires or simply *is*, par excellence, *the* form of human agency, *dunamis*.

Everything in human life and on the Tragic stage is coloured by or takes its character from temporality. Character, is not terminal or static *hexis* but *ēthos*, it is habituation, what one is become through having done or having suffered over time. Being *anthrōpos* is not just dying, being *thanatos*, as opposed to not dying. It is being subject to change, living in a context of day-today interactions, being *ephemeros*. Knowledge, facts or truths identified, are things grasped and comprehended, they are threads held together. In turn they hold persons and communities together, when they form a shared body of knowledge. Yet empirical life, the day-to-day life of the embodied person in the historical *durée*, like the encounter with Dionysus, is a dynamic situation. The problem of what one *is* becomes apparent in the vicinity of Dionysus, and what one *is* is contingent and shaped by circumstance. It is never final, but is determined by pressures and forces and persons in one's vicinity. It is determined by a character that is not simply given, but that manifests itself constantly through its acts. Every act, desire, choice to greater or lesser degree modifies all the other acts that, aggregated, *sumperilabomena*, we infer to be the person's *ēthos*. Character is always a kind of synopsis, a synoptic view taken over acts. It is always partial, for one does not know what is to come; we never say a living person is definitively blessed or happy. While it lives it is subject to this indeterminate order of time, in which things and characters are "always coming into being"[155].

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[154] See Gell, 1998: 106-54.

[155] See § 5.2.4 p. 301 n. 31 on Arist. *Poet.*1450 a 16-23. And cf. Hdt. 1.32, where the great Athenian, Solon, explains that a person, while it lives, cannot be said to be *olbios*, definitively blessed or happy, only to have "good chance", being *eutuchos*, for things to fall together fortunately for it [πρὶν δ' ἂν τελευτήσῃ, (Hdt. 1.32.37-8 ἐπισχεῖν μηδὲ καλέειν κω ὄλβιον, ἀλλ' εὐτυχέα). We cannot say of a person that it

The tension between knowledge – thought to be of static, tenable *facts* – and empirical experience – the flowing, dynamic order of *acts* – is one that expresses itself in many ways, not least in the complex ambiguities attendant upon Dionysus, his claims and the experience of him suggested in *Bacchae*. I suspect that this is the tension that accounts for the "slight equivocation" that Halliwell identified in Aristotle's discussion of *praxeis* and *ēthos* in the *Poetics*[156]. It is the basic epistemic problem that issues from the enigma of time and how to 'hold perspective', so to speak, how to unite perspective (viewpoint, even state of mind) with that of others and ensure that it corresponds in a *valid* way to phenomena (what 'valid' will mean will of course depend on values and vice versa). It is the tension that explains the need felt to distinguish between "character-viewpoint" and "personality-viewpoint" by Gill, discussing Greek Tragedy[157]. It accounts for the way in which interpreters feel confronted, in Dionysus, by the complexities of absence and presence. Always coming into being and tending to hide itself, the person of Dionysus is much like Heraclitus' *phusis*, for he too "likes to conceal itself": the drama of epiphany requires the character of concealment[158]. Concealment entails also occasional apparition, if intermittent and more or less unpredictable. It entails a certain receptiveness in persons commensurate with this dynamism, forms of inference that are apposite to the dynamic character of phenomena.

The space on the mask of Dionysus, the mouth (from which apparently debouches a god's voice and mind), is the very pattern of this tension. It is like a conduit from the inferred *fact* of character within, to the *acts* of person without, constantly 'flowing out' into the public domain, co-presence. These form a kind of electric circuit, flowing in and out, it is not a question of substance, but rather of "charge". Dionysus' *gelān*, his laughter, is the painted, static smile dynamized or made animate as laughter through the closing of the circuit with co-present humans – those natural theorizers, dazzling interpreters – who are the ones bristling with vitality, the ones who *conduct*, invest with meaning. They make the static and

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'gathers together' – *sullabein* – all the elements of any condition, because as a time-bound being the elements are always coming into being, Hdt. 1.32.38-9: Τὰ πάντα μέν νυν ταῦτα συλλαβεῖν ἄνθρωπον ἐόντα ἀδύνατόν ἐστι, see also § 3.3.3 p. 122 n. 163, § 5.3.3 p. 219 n. 88.

[156] See p. 51 n. 26, p. 137 n. 9, pp. 302-3 n. 31.

[157] Gill, 1986: 252-3.

[158] Heraclitus fr. 123 <φύσις> δὲ καθ' Ἡράκλειτον <κρύπτεσθαι φιλεῖ>. See also 4.3.4 p. 181 n. 137. Just as implicit character becomes explicit, the pattern of things is concealed, becoming occasionally apparent. Dionysus comes rhythmically, a presence at his festivals, or there in the midst of social well-being and cheer. Dionysus, son of Zeus, son of Kronos is like *phusis* and underwritten by *nomos*: he is just the material to bind together being and becoming, a magic thread. The gods conceal time, 888-9: κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως / δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα. Whatever is divine becomes instituted and becomes natural, *nomos* is the habituated divine *daimonion*, it is instituted, naturalized *and* natural, 894-6: ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον, / τό τ' ἐν χρόνωι μακρῶι νόμιμον / ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός, see on these important lines also § 4.3 p. 248 n. 101, § 7.3 p. 400-401. Perhaps in this light might we read the famous words ascribed to Heraclitus, fr. 119 ἦθος ἀνθρώπωι δαίμων. On time as a rhythm of concealment and revelation, see also Ajax' lines at Soph. *Aj*. 646-7: Ἄπανθ' ὁ μακρὸς κἀναρίθμητος χρόνος/ φύει τ' ἄδηλα καὶ φανέντα κρύπτεται·.

the transcendent to move and they bind the threads of identity. If this seems a lot to read into the smile on a mask, it is really that Euripides has turned the mask into a complex instrument, something that seems animated, that changes as the situation changes. In other words, he has succeeding in making it animate, a model of just that which is radically subject to the continuous shifting of temporality.

En merei, by turns, "most terrible and most gentle to humans", δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος 861, Dionysus says of himself, and both sweet and daunting is the smile and laughter of other people.[159] The smile that wreathes the face of Dionysus, either sweet and attractive or the sign of a dangerous occlusion of meaning and purpose is, like the human smile, always the index of a sociable (interpreted) agency[160]. Laughter, that strange human reflex, a temporary relaxation of will, (an uncanny penetration of the everyday, like those other involuntary reflexes: communicable yawns, the jerk of the somnolent, slips of the tongue, hiccoughs, *déja vus*, the bubbling up arbitrarily of vivid memories and compulsive behaviours of countless sorts[161]) in its contortion of the face and involuntary shaking of the body, laughter represents a social danger. Laughter can be the smoke, one may say, that indexes the fire of burning shame, that corroding solvent of *kleos* and *timē*, as one stands in the *polis* amongst one's social fellows.

5.6 Summary

Dionysus requires inspired modes of inference. The faculty of mind, the gift of Promethean fire, by which humans are so impressively *deinos*, awe-inspiring – Πολλὰ τὰ δεινὰ κοὐδὲν ἀν-/ θρώπου δεινότερον πέλει[162] – has only a relative value in Dionysus' proximity. The encounter with this god constrains us to review our epistemic and emotional postures. Dionysus cannot be deciphered the way humans ordinarily read *characters*. His signs are not of the linguistic kind, untranscribed. They are "natured" signs becoming abducted into the body of knowledge, which we call tradition, custom or common sense, "what the common people cherish". There is as if a perpetual circle of transformations from natural into normative and normative into natural, with Dionysus. By the familiar patterning of thought and its *syntaxis* of experience, events, phenomena, cause and effect: modes and identities are distinct. With Dionysus they seem to move on a dynamic spectrum. The meaning of the

[159] Cf. "The *Bacchae* not only exhibits the ambiguities of laughter, its involvement in both celebration and cruelty; it transmutes them into the material, the motivations and the disastrous consequences of tragic conflict.", Halliwell, 2008: 139.

[160] ". . . the god's mask remains smiling, but the visual effect of this smile does not remain consistent." Foley, 1980: 129.

[161] Cf. Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a and above § 2.2.2 p. 56 n. 140. See also Giddens and Goffman on the significance of control of the body in interactions, Giddens, 1984: 78-80.

[162] Soph. *Ant.* 332-3.

same thing becomes its very opposite: the contents of things changes with events in time. While the outward form of the god is mutable, his purpose is unbending, *agnamptos*.

Probability, deduction, the usual modes of decipherment: these are neutralized or even invalidated with Dionysus. Inspiration, emotion, disposition are all-important. The power of calculation, planning ahead and anticipation – *elpis* – fades and with them the effectiveness of human *technē* and the validity of an orientation towards the absent *telos*. The notion of the "natural sign", a trace of presence rather than a conventional mark typically indicating absence, is a complex and difficult one. What I am here calling Dionysiac abduction is the imaginative, habitually personificatory mode, of inference uniquely commensurate with the dynamic personhood of Dionysus.

Those phenomena adduced by philosophers to exemplify "natural signs" and explain the abduction of agency, happen also to be phenomena seen in *Bacchae* as the conspicuous traces of agency. Dionysus is a certain kind of fire-god, distinct from fire in its utilitarian modes or character. He is a god in whose dramatization we are encouraged to discern the double potentiality of something like hair: either or *in turn* revealing agency or absence of agency. Dionysus is a laughing god: the meaning of his laughter changes and it is this changefulness, the dynamism or animacy of Dionysus' "signs", which also entails an *ad hoc responsiveness* not quite equivalent to the reading of conventional, arbitrary signs.

The human mind "seizes" meanings and the mental objects of its intentionality. Dionysus challenges this very cognitive mode of possessing knowledge. For Dionysus' world is one not of static objects but of things in motion and qualities impossible to represent in signs, but which must be experienced *in person*. Dionysus' face and his proximity seem to call for a divinatory posture. We have to become *mainomenoi,* paradoxically also *out of person*, inspired like Teiresias, whose craft is so violently impugned by Pentheus. We require the healthy *mania* of mantic inspiration, as Plato put it, which the Thebans did not have. The god of fire prodigies – *thaumata* – is a person through whom becomes articulated the problem of communication, just as he promises special modes of communing, which solve that problem. Pentheus' body is described in the final scenes as something "not easily discovered", something like a gruesome puzzle "pieced together with difficulty". Dionysus is a special category of person, revealing how vague and difficult to locate meaning and identity always are. It takes an inspired quality of *knowledgeability* to begin to apprehend the truths implicated in Dionysus' presence.

6

Ōps ops[1]**: A Voice in the *Aithēr*, a Face in the Clouds**

> Human cognitive systems have generated a stunning array of cultural forms. Any method of controlling this splendor theoretically offers a glimpse of the structure of the imagination. Dionysus dances not in heaven but in our heads.[2]

In *Bacchae* Dionysus neither dances only in heaven, nor only "in our heads". He dances as a body amongst humans who are not any more subjects of thought and feeling and language than they are embodied presences, flesh and fluid. Perhaps if the Theatre of Dionysus were a cinema, the argument could be made that this was a spectacle designed to take place in the minds of the audience its realities only activated cognitively. Yet this is a theatre of present bodies, live voices and sensual effects. In *Bacchae* still more, it is the very entanglement of the virtual and the physical, of presence and absence, which constitutes the dance. Perhaps if we feel that interpretation entails finding a method to "control splendour", then we shall find that Dionysus is a cognitive god, one revealing the structure of human imagination and working through it. And yet, Dionysus' presence seems to reveal that the mind and its capacities shows only one face of being. He is the most emphatically incarnate of Greek gods and his dance is not only, or even primarily, a cognitive dance. It is the dance of human bodies – of mind and body *poikolōs*, forming a variegated whole or continuum – in the midst of other like bodies and minds. The mysterious, the irreducibly opaque dimension of existence is the life of the body, the being matter *and* mind, alternately a subject of experience and a natural object. In this chapter I attempt to come to grips with Euripides' Dionysiac vision as a vision of the enigmatic contiguousness of mind and body, voice and flesh, presence and absence.

The Romans called a mask a *persona*: an object 'through which', *per*, a voice 'sounds', *sona*. The Greeks called it simply "face", *prosōpon*. *Ōps* in Greek designates "eye" and "face". *Ops* is a poetic word for "voice". These are the two tools – body and its verbal contents – that form the components of the actor's suite. They are also the two necessary elements for the historical, embodied presence of persons. This is shown in different ways through the action of *Bacchae*.

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[1] *LSJ* s.v. ὄψ: "voice, whether in speaking, shouting, lamenting . . . word (Cogn. with ἔπος, εἰπεῖν.). ὤψ: "eye, face, countenance . . . θεῇς εἰς ὦπα ἐοικεν in face she is like the goddesses, Il.3.158".

[2] Lawson & McCauley, 1990: 184.

The Pronomos Vase, dating to the period of the composition and performance of *Bacchae*, depicts Dionysus with the cast of a satyr-play[3]. It is a most striking set of scenes of actors partly costumed and partly clothed. Theatrical masks – heads – of satyrs, maenads and other dramatic characters are held, regarded, or gazed at in a posture that will become a visual trope of Ancient painting[4], or they are free-floating, or set to the side or simply carried as portable props. Lyres, flutes, dancing, costume; winged Eros, actors in the accoutrements of specific characters (like Heracles); dressed heads, a vine, a narthex; the enthroned, beardless Dionysus, sensual and ringleted, with Ariadne on his lap: the scene is a marvellous tableau of the world of theatre and its god. It is also a useful resource for getting some kind of idea about what Greek theatrical masks were like: not simply façades, not surfaces covering the front of the head, but three dimensional heads, containers in which to place the actor's own head.

The frescoes preserved at the Campanian town of Pompeii very often evoke bacchic scenes. Those, however, convey Hellenistic and Roman views of Dionysus, which seem at first glance, in most cases to betoken a reduced sense of the meaningfulness of the god. By that period he has become a token of Eastern Mediterranean cosmopolitan "life-style" and sophistication. Roman Bacchus designates metnonymously: Wine, pleasure, the life of *otium* and *tryphē*, a Roman symbol for the life of *luxuria*[5]. Dionysus has become the patron of a certain kind of global consumer's understanding of pleasure and the good life. "A regulated ecstasy has lost its germ of danger", wrote Martin Nilsson memorably[6]. Certainly by the Roman period, at least in that provincial and culturally aspirational Campanian town, with its merchant's view of Dionysiac religion, that germ seems vanished, if those frescoes are anything to go by.

Modern interpretation of Dionysus, since Nietzsche that is, may be seen as an effort to reclaim the more dangerous and enigmatic god of depths, of the Greek Classical period, from the expurgated, Roman imitation of Bacchus, god of surfaces[7]. The cultic, solemn,

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[3] Circa 410 BCE. *ARV*[2] 1336, 1; Museo Archeologico Nazionale: Side A: Dionysus and the cast of a satyr play. Side B: Dionysos and Ariadne with satyrs and maenads. On the Pronomos Vase, see Giacobello in Giacobello, [ed.] 2015: 61-73; Taplin &Wyles, [edd.] 2010; Beazley, 1963.

[4] The "Yorick" attitude, we might call it, for it brings so forcefully to mind that scene in *Hamlet* (and *its* visual depictions) in which the prince finds the dead Fool's skull and holds it aloft, inspired to deep reflections on the nature and identity of mortal persons.

[5] The affair of the Bacchanalia and it suppression, 186 BCE, described by the Roman historian Livy, does suggest that Dionysus and his rituals could still represent a threat to the powers that be. This does not in itself mean that he held a dangerous *religious* significance, but more likely the opposite, that he was seen as Pentheus saw him, as only a pretext for the immorality and disorder which was the threat, see Livy *Ab urbe condita* 39; on this incident Walsh, 1996 and on bacchic Religion at Rome, Nilsson, 1953.

[6] Nilsson, 1949: 194, 208.

[7] Which is the same hedonistic character found depicted again later in Renaissance painting. On the frescoes at Pompeii and the bacchic atmosphere and lifestyle of the civilized East they are meant to evoke, see Zanker, 1998.

fearsome god who upsets the foregone conclusions and established values of the "city as economic community", would come to require a cautious, anthropological approach. With this redeemed god for a godless modernity, the usual strategies for interpreting persons and our own unexpressed assumptions will have to be made manifest and relativized.

In Euripides' time it seems Dionysus has not yet lost that germ of danger. Perhaps, however this "germ" is a seed or "vine-cutting" planted by poets like Euripides. Carpenter in his study of Archaic, black-figure vase representations of Dionysus suggests that it is not the case that there was an original, authentic "deep" Dionysus which fades with some supposed cultural decadence and loss of seriousness. Not unlike the Pompeiian Bacchus, Dionysiac motifs in the 6th Century seemed to have an ambient function, associated with the utensils of the *symposion* and the mirth of company, until the 5th Century and the effects of Greek Drama on the perceptions of the gods[8]. It is Tragedy, we may suspect, which through its articulateness and responsiveness, through the opportunities that poets have to develop and modify the versions (handling, "drafts") of their predecessors and contemporaries, invests figures like Dionysus or Oedipus with such "depth". New angles, new versions like layers, every performance a different kind of new lighting on a subject, a newest portrait, a fresh draft: these create the conditions for an ever more *dimensional* development of the meaning of their acts and lives. Tragedy is a creative and constitutive tradition, not simply a phase in the objective transmission of an original person or essential, timeless character. It is historical – an historical engagement with questions and persons that are only ever *as if* not themselves entirely historical.

Wine does not simply mean harmless pleasure. It is associated with inspired *mania*: in Euripides' hands Dionysus becomes a remarkably ambivalent figure. The potential character of wine, either it will reduce or heighten, seems to have served almost as an inspiration for the *Metaphorik* of ambiguity of *Bacchae.* The wine god is one kind of person within another. He inspires not only merriment but reveals a different aspect of reality through its estrangement, the alternately healthy or insane alienation of humans from their daily identity. In this chapter, we explore the mask and face of Dionysus and its implication for the themes of personhood and identity treated of throughout this study. The mask too, has a double potentiality and invites an interpretive posture – some see in it only escape, hedonism and flight from seriousness, others recognize its power to bind individuals together, to refresh and heighten the sabbatical mind. The mask inspires our questioning: does it merely cover and dissemble or does it conceal in such a way that we find a deeper meaningfulness, a new perspective on personhood and agency?

[8] Carpenter, 1986.

6.1.1 Presence and Appearance

τίς αὐτὸν δεῦρ' ἂν ὄψιν εἰς ἐμὴν
καλέσειεν, ὡς ἴδηι με τὴν εὐδαίμονα;[9]

Who would summon him here face-to-face with me
So that he may see the fortunate one that I am?

Human personhood is not co-extensive with its appearance. Yet the existence of a person does depend on its physical form. The body is a necessary but insufficient condition for the presence of a person. Presence is not identical to appearance. Agauē carries her son's head, the actor's mask. She wants him summoned to her – "before me", "into my presence", "face-to-face", *opsin eis emēn*. He is dead, no longer there, no longer capable of "seeing being seen", *horōn horōnta*[10]. He is also "not there" as long as Agauē is not *cognitively there* – in her right mind, conscious – to recognize him. There is a symmetry with Actaeon, who when he had lost his human form was still "there", conscious as himself, but that virtual element of self remained undetected by others in the body of a stag, hunted down by his own dogs, which were incapable of discerning his personhood in its new bestial form.

Pentheus has lost both face and voice, the two crucial components of personal identity and also the two dimensions of the stuff from which drama is made: visible, public identity and talk, issuing from within, out into the public domain. Dionysus as immortal is a versatile person: he can be there as disembodied voice; he can be there as an embodied entity amongst others[11]. The human person must be *potentially* always both physical presence *and* voice, in order to meet the requirements of the possession of the potentiality of personhood. The decisive criterion for human personhood is the presence *together* of body and voice. The criterion for agency will be the presence of self-reflexive mind, which we infer from a voice which "hears itself hearing" and knows itself heard.

The crux with Dionysus – and with all persons that matter to other persons – is not whether their form be visible, but that they actually *be* there, that their unique identity be present. We console ourselves with images, icons and effigies, even though we know this to be only salve. We feel our dead are gone, *phroudoi*. We mourn and regret the absence of the dead and lost. They are irreplaceable; there is no substitute for the persons we love, they are not fungible – as is one of the themes of Euripides' *Alcestis*. We have icons of them or the record

[9] 1257-8.

[10] 470 ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα, καὶ δίδωσιν ὄργια – "Seeing him, seeing me".

[11] The stranger was not there, Dionysus becomes a disembodied voice: 1077-79.

of their words which can seem to bring them back to mind momentarily, but we do not have their living faces freely producing *new* words in *le temps irréversible*. We represent them, but never succeed in *really* making them present again. Humans master *Vorstellung* and *Herstellung*, but time and mortality remain *agnampta*, unbending and unpenetrated. Presence would mean co-presence *in shifting time* – occurrent, indeterminate and always coming into being.

Dionysus in his myths, such as in *Bacchae,* is distinguished by his becoming co-present with specific, historical humans[12]. He is for a time not a representation, behind which to motivate some mortal intention or normally intelligible agency, but a person who has come into being in that organic, inadvertent way that natural persons, having bodies and being subject to time, come into being: much is made of Dionysus' conception, gestation, surrogacy, birth, infancy and career travelling in the historical world of "the cities of men" in *Bacchae*. Representations are sufficiently effective for those *purely* virtual beings, the gods, for they are always circumscribed by the limits of their representations. They are often only intermittently incarnate or materialized; their presence is strange and wondrous. Their presence is not as tightly bound to a peculiar form or appearance as it is with mortals.

Gods can be worshipped in an endless number of forms, their personhood not depending on any specific shape. In Ancient Greece as in many places in the world, gods took iconic and aniconic form. Wooden masks, liquids, statues, effigies, natural phenomena, anything perceptible it seems, could be *impersonated*, invested with personhood. At Samos, Hera was worshipped as a wooden plank, *sanis,* as was Artemis at Ikaros, as a piece of wood[13]. One of the most ancient forms of worship is that of sacred stones. The Greeks, Philo of Byblos recorded, possessed these, calling them *baitulia,* their word for meteorite, derived apparently from the Semitic "beth el", *house of god*[14]. They saw these as *lithoi empsuchoi,* stones having mind within. Virtual mind is not contingent on its containers, (it can be transmitted through space in ciphers, after all, such as in texts or over time such as in the inherited beliefs and practices of a people, their *paradochai*, *nomoi* and *orgia* borne along by successive generations). Inversely, bodies can seem to be emptied of mind, as in the case of the maenads in *Bacchae*.

[12] Historical in that even if "mythic" they have been temporally and geographically delimited and seen as subject to the physical laws of ordinary, historical life unlike super-natural or daemonic beings.

[13] Hera: Callim. *Fr.* 100; *Phoronis* fr. 4: Καλλιθόη κλειδοῦχος Ὀλυμπιάδος βασιλείης,/ Ἥρης Ἀργείης, ἣ στέμμασι καὶ θυσάνοισι/ πρώτη κόσμησεν περὶ κίονα μακρὸν ἀνάσσης. Artemis: Clem. Al. *Protrep.* 4.46.3.

[14] *F.H.G.* III 567B-568 A. "It appears, from the examination of all the evidence, that the name βαίτυλοι was appropriated to certain small stones of peculiar character, to which various daemonic – or as we might say, magical – properties were ascribed.", Moore, 1903: 204-5.

Alfred Gell's discussion of these issues, of idols and their animation, in his anthropology of art, which rests on his sophisticated notion of agency, is very rich and suggestive for the scholar of Greek polytheism and its poetry. From face and voice we may reduce still further the minimal conditions for the attribution of person, of mind within body. Eyes – *ops*, a window out onto the world that suggests and interior, space – promise insides and that is all it requires, only the *implication*, for humans to infer the potential presence of person within[15]:

> Eyes are, of all body orifices, those which signify 'interiority' (i.e. the possession of mind and intentionality) most immediately. The particular attention paid to the eyes of these idols arises, not from the need to represent the body realistically, but from the need to represent the body in such a way as to imply that the body is *only* a body, and that a much more important entity, the mind, is immured within it.[16]

This is the cognitive realism of Attic drama too: it is *synecdochic*. It needs only show parts for the audience to react as if to a whole. Pentheus is reduced to his mask/face[17]. He becomes *literally* only a part and it has become revealed that by an habitual inference we have interacted with something that is never "there" in the way that objects are. Inference is always this assembling or perfective action, moving from parts to whole, from facets to identities. Persons in the theatre are like gods, in having this only too manifestly virtual, timeless character. Person, one's own and that of one's others, in life the dearest "property" – *ktēma* – for humans, has this absolutely paradoxical and enigmatic nature. Nothing else is like it, nothing else so precious and yet it is only ever the promise of a whole or consummate identity, only an implication abducted or divined.

[15] And person is always a kind of elemental potentiality within, always something inferred rather than a phenomenon more directly, or at any rate empirically experienced. Hence, since it is always by implication that we know its presence, the implication is sufficient to indicate a presence.

[16] Gell, 1998: 135-36.

[17] Earlier, his name was a part of him that he could not realize would stand for his whole fate, *penthos*, woe, 367-9: Πενθεὺς δ' ὅπως μὴ πένθος εἰσοίσει δόμοις/ τοῖς σοῖσι, Κάδμε· μαντικῆι μὲν οὐ λέγω,/ τοῖς πράγμασιν δέ. And subsequently, he had offered his name and origins as the whole containing his entire identity, 507: Πενθεύς, Ἀγαυῆς παῖς, πατρὸς δ' Ἐχίονος.

6.1.2 *Prosōpopoiia*: Apostrophe

In the spectacle of apostrophe – the address of an absent person as if it were present – we become constrained to reflect on what person is and what it is not, on the power and reality of the personal fiction. *Bacchae* complicates any too self-evident conception of the presence and absence of persons. We witness persons who are bodily present but in fact absent and the god who is thought by Pentheus not to be (there), or treated as a probability by Kadmos. He is alternately a verified embodied presence, a disembodied presence or, simultaneously, a misapprised phantasm and an hallucinatory double of himself.

Personhood, identity, character, psychology, subjectivity: these qualities – like Euboulides of Miletus' "heap", *soros*[18] – are marked by vagueness and paradox. They are qualities of composition, impossible to quantify. They are only as graspable as the ghost of Antikleia, whom Odysseus in the world of incorporeal persons pathetically tries to hold, three times in vain[19]:

> ὣς ἔφατ', αὐτὰρ ἐγώ γ' ἔθελον φρεσὶ μερμηρίξας
> μητρὸς ἐμῆς ψυχὴν ἐλέειν κατατεθνηυίης.
> τρὶς μὲν ἐφωρμήθην, ἐλέειν τέ με θυμὸς ἀνώγει,
> τρὶς δέ μοι ἐκ χειρῶν σκιῇ εἴκελον ἢ καὶ ὀνείρῳ
> ἔπτατ'·
>
> Thus she spoke, but my heart was torn [*mermērixas*] and I wished
> To console [*eleein*] the spirit [*psuchē*] of my deceased mother.
> Three times I sprang forward, my heart [*thumos*] bidding me to pity,
> Three times like a shadow or a dream out of my hands
> She flitted [*eptat'*].

The Homeric notion of a person was of something composed of two distinct elements: solid flesh that melts away and an immaterial, fluttery part that becomes disengaged from matter at death; it survives the pyre having always been like a wisp of smoke itself. The living human subject is a commingling of congealed matter, it holds together – *xunechei* – and some breath-like, sublimated quality that disperses. Like "winged words" – ἔπεα πτερόεντα – this flits away, weightless. His mother's sorrowfully intangible spirit explained this Homeric

[18] On the so-called *sorites* paradox of Euboulides, see Diog. Laert. 2.108 and 7.44 ff.

[19] Hom. *Od.* 11. 204-8.

view of the ontological nature and fate of the human person to the still embodied, historical person of her son, Odysseus[20]:

> ’ὤ μοι, τέκνον ἐμόν, περὶ πάντων κάμμορε φωτῶν,
> οὔ τί σε Περσεφόνεια Διὸς θυγάτηρ ἀπαφίσκει,
> ἀλλ' αὕτη δίκη ἐστὶ βροτῶν, ὅτε τίς κε θάνῃσιν.
> οὐ γὰρ ἔτι σάρκας τε καὶ ὀστέα ἶνες ἔχουσιν,
> ἀλλὰ τὰ μέν τε πυρὸς κρατερὸν μένος αἰθομένοιο
> δαμνᾷ, ἐπεί κε πρῶτα λίπῃ λεύκ' ὀστέα θυμός,
> ψυχὴ δ' ἠΰτ' ὄνειρος ἀποπταμένη πεπότηται.
>
> “Oh me, my child, ill-fated of all men,
> Persephone, Zeus’ daughter, is not deceiving you at all,
> But this is the very law for mortals, when one should die.
> For your sinews no longer hold together the flesh and bone,
> But the mighty ferocity [*menos*] of gleaming fire subdues these,
> And as soon as the soul [*thumos*] should first leave the pale bones,
> The spirit [*psuchē*] flits away, fluttering like a dream.

In *Iliad* Achilles is a man in his prime, a being of physical splendour, god-like for his body, while in *Odyssey* or in Euripides’ *Hecuba*, where he is a vengeful ghost, his body is no more, he is only a presence, not *present*. He has the same ontic identity as Antikleia, and he longs above all for the embodied condition of mortal existence, which he has lost[21]. He is *phroudos*: “gone away”, “vanished”. Hector’s body is there, glorious as a Trojan Achilles, he is a loved presence amongst his people, to his wife and the son he has sired. By the end of *Iliad* Troy is emptying out and Hector’s body has been drained of its most valuable contents. Hector the person is *phroudos*. In *Iliad* he has become an object for Achilles to outrage and the gods look down on the husk of Hector with pity[22]. The body was so much the man, it remains vestigially Hector, a spoor of the person, and it therefore matters how it is treated – by this emotionally plausible contradiction that thing is still partially Hector. Odysseus is a body full of mind. He is nagged at by his body, he must keep it going, cover it up, disguise it and dissemble. He must pretend it is another body and feign that it is “no one’s” body.

The prologue of *Bacchae* is a manifestation, a dramatic theophany to the audience. I am a god and I am a human body, explains Dionysus. He describes his conception and birth and the

[20] Hom. *Od.* 11. 216-22.

[21] Hom. *Od.* 11. 487-91.

[22] Hom. *Il.* 24. 23-4.

thrust of what he says is the establishment of his spatio-temporal presence, specifically here at Thebes, now at this moment, the first visitation in Greece. The ritual hymn of the bacchants, the *parodos,* provides the verification of a third party. In mythic, lyric terms they underwrite what he has said, again emphasizing Dionysus' origins and incarnation. In the first episode Dionysus is disputed flesh: to Pentheus the son of Semelē is no god; to Kadmos it will be useful to act as if he were; for Teiresias this is a divine being. Pentheus arrives in Thebes, he has been *phroudos* in the self-evident way: simply *ekdēmos.* To Pentheus' mind it is flesh and physical impulse which defines persons and their motivations. Identity and causation is exhausted by these. How persons are present, bodily, explains why they are present, for the satisfaction of their bodies' desires. "Get your hands off me", he bursts out, he fears being infected by Teiresias and Kadmos, who himself will ultimately be carried in, as body parts in the smeared arms of his grandfather: a body but no presence.

In the second episode Dionysus is made present and accounted for, and every attention is given to his body, while his own responses reflect a concern with Pentheus' mind. In the third episode the Stranger's imprisoned body comes magically free and the imprisoned bacchants are emancipated to become themselves "gone", 445: φροῦδαί γ' ἐκεῖναι λελυμέναι. Dionysus sits by, visible but unseen, while Pentheus frantically chases and stabs at a *phasma* he takes for Dionysus. By the fourth episode, Pentheus has succumbed to the "light frenzy", which the Stranger has set in him. He talks to the Stranger but now sees double persons, bodies and illusions – the man before him is, magically or madly, also a beast.

In the scene of the leading to the mountain of the king by the Stranger, the thwarted espionage and *sparagmos* of Pentheus, Dionysus will undergo a mysterious transformation, a *disappearance*. He leads the party to the mountain, an escort of the spectacle – *pompos theōrias*[23] – but suddenly is not there, "vanished"[24]. The next time he is perceived it will be disembodied: an incandescent thread of holy fire like lightning stretching from earth to sky. Dionysus resounds, a voice in the *aithēr*[25]. The voice summons the cognitively empty bodies of the maenads to break apart the flesh and bones of Pentheus' person.[26]

In the Messenger's speech in the fifth episode, the king who has been walking and talking, surmising and scheming, is described reduced to parts of a body, a puzzle impossible to put together again. His mother carries in his head, his grandfather the disassembled members,

[23] 1047: ξένος θ' ὃς ἡμῖν πομπὸς ἦν θεωρίας.

[24] 1077: καὶ τὸν ξένον μὲν οὐκέτ' εἰσορᾶν παρῆν.

[25] Holy fire: 1082-3; Voice: 1079-81.

[26] 1079-81.

so hard to carry, shattered into a thousand pieces – *muriois zētēmasin* – never to be bound together again[27]. Pentheus has become unembodied. Agauē has come onstage in rejuvenated splendour, a fit and triumphant hunter, most skilled of all in the sport[28]. She is a marvellous body but out of her mind, physically present but still essentially absent. Slowly she will be brought around, into her mind[29]. Kadmos will bring her back into focus, a mind recognizing itself, its body and the faces and identity of those in her co-presence[30]. Agauē will come to herself and become *tragic*, only when she becomes self-reflexive again[31]. She is co-present with Kadmos; Pentheus is gone and they too shall have to go in the literal sense, becoming exiles from Thebes just as the maenads and Pentheus had been exiled from themselves[32]. Dionysus returns in the body of the Stranger speaking in a different person again, the one of the divine being incarnate that has established itself in the prologue[33]. He addresses ruined Thebes and the fugitive House of Kadmos. Agauē will be terminally unhoused. The old king and his queen will become re-embodied; theriomorphosed they will wander the world of human cities as snakes[34]. In this exile from physical form they will retain their identities and one day re-enter themselves and take their seats among the Blessed[35].

While it may not at first seem an apostrophe, Pentheus' address to his mother in the final moments of his life is surely one to an absent person. It becomes clear that a definitive quality of a healthy, sufficient person is its responsiveness to others in its co-presence. *Mania* of the unhealthy kind consists precisely in the loss of responsiveness to the voice of others and the extinction of one's own personal, internal voice. Equally the positive effects of Dionysus may be described not as the annulment of self but of the enhancement of its responsiveness, The internal voice of mind is a necessary element of fully qualified presence of person, 1115-21:

ὁ δὲ μίτραν κόμης ἄπο
ἔρριψεν, ὥς νιν γνωρίσασα μὴ κτάνοι
τλήμων Ἀγαυή, καὶ λέγει παρήιδος

[27] 1218-19: οὗ σῶμα μοχθῶν μυρίοις ζητήμασιν / φέρω τόδ'.

[28] 1202-15.

[29] 1259-96.

[30] 1271-76. Note that she has somehow recognized her father all along (πάτερ, μέγιστον κομπάσαι πάρεστί σοι, 1233), but is otherwise alienated from herself, her own words and incapable of recognizing her son's head that she is holding, e.g. 1272: ὡς ἐκλέλησμαί γ' ἃ πάρος εἴπομεν, πάτερ.

[31] 1260-2: εἰ δὲ διὰ τέλους / ἐν τῶιδ' ἀεὶ μενεῖτ' ἐν ὧι καθέστατε, / οὐκ εὐτυχοῦσαι δόξετ' οὐχὶ δυστυχεῖν.

[32] Maenads' exile, 36: ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων. Agauē's future, 1365-87.

[33] 1340-3.

[34] 1330-39, 1352-62.

[35] 1339: μακάρων τ' ἐς αἶαν σὸν καθιδρύσει βίον. But cf. Kadmos more optimistic outlook on his future, 1360-2: οὐδὲ παύσομαι / κακῶν ὁ τλήμων οὐδὲ τὸν καταιβάτην / Ἀχέροντα πλεύσας ἥσυχος γενήσομαι.

ψαύων· Ἐγώ τοι, μῆτερ, εἰμί, παῖς σέθεν
Πενθεύς, ὃν ἔτεκες ἐν δόμοις Ἐχίονος·
οἴκτιρε δ' ὦ μῆτέρ με μηδὲ ταῖς ἐμαῖς
ἁμαρτίαισι παῖδα σὸν κατακτάνῃς.

He tore the snood from
His hair, so that recognizing him, wretched
Agauē might not kill him, and he says, touching
Her cheek: "I am, look mother, your child
Pentheus, whom you bore in the house of Echion.
Have pity on me my mother and do not murder me
For my mistakes, your own child.

Agauē cannot recognize Pentheus' voice or his face. The name "Echion" here, as names have been throughout the play, is a kind of map or spatio-temporal bearing, a social and existential co-ordinate, which Agauē is unable to take[36]. Her possession by "Bacchos" causes her eyes to roll, they are as if unattached, incapable of focus or making connection. The eye is detached from the mind as acts are decoupled from agents; and the relation between Agauē and her past self, present or future is collapsed, just as her relation to the being in front of her, Pentheus, is a thread snapped, 1122-4:

ἡ δ' ἀφρὸν ἐξιεῖσα καὶ διαστρόφους
κόρας ἑλίσσουσ', οὐ φρονοῦσ' ἃ χρὴ φρονεῖν,
ἐκ Βακχίου κατείχετ', οὐδ' ἔπειθέ νιν.

She spewed foam and her rolling eyes
Were spinning, she could not recognize what she had to,
She was possessed by Bacchos, and he couldn't change her mind
[*epeithe*: "persuade"].

Later, in the scene in which Kadmos recuperates Agauē's identity –the Psychotherapy Scene – it is a process of re-focusing the eye[37]; and a gradual regaining of language and then names

[36] Cf. 1274, where Agauē is coming round, and it is just this "co-ordinate" which she herself uses to locate herself, 1273-6: Κα. ἐς ποῖον ἦλθες οἶκον ὑμεναίων μέτα; / Αg. Σπαρτῶι μ' ἔδωκας, ὡς λέγουσ', Ἐχίονι. / Κα. τίς οὖν ἐν οἴκοις παῖς ἐγένετο σῶι πόσει; / Αg. Πενθεύς, ἐμῆι τε καὶ πατρὸς κοινωνίαι. Cf. Strepsiades in Aristophanes' *Clouds* 206-16, incapable of reading a map; capable of registering and perceiving, but not of making symbolic inference or connecting wholes to parts.

[37] 1264: πρῶτον μὲν ἐς τόνδ' αἰθέρ' ὄμμα σὸν μέθες. 1267: λαμπρότερος ἢ πρὶν καὶ διειπετέστερος.

and the relationships they encode[38]. This is how she will be made to begin to recognize relations and thus become her self again, to reconstitute a relationship with herself, that is. This is a demonstration of what being a person having and apprehending identity consists of ,1264-75.

Present persons are heads you can hold, cheeks you can touch – embodied human entities – which you can *also* talk to. They know themselves addressed and exchange *vox transitoria* in kind[39]. In a moment of more obvious apostrophe and high pathos, Kadmos has Pentheus' head at hand. He has his body most dismayingly present physically but addresses a person that is no person, it is *phroudos*, not knowing itself addressed, no longer capable of ever "knowing" anything again, 1308-22[40]:

ὃς συνεῖχες, ὦ τέκνον,
τοὐμὸν μέλαθρον, παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς,
πόλει τε τάρβος ἦσθα· τὸν γέροντα δὲ
οὐδεὶς ὑβρίζειν ἤθελ' εἰσορῶν τὸ σὸν
κάρα· δίκην γὰρ ἀξίαν ἐλάμβανες.
νῦν δ' ἐκ δόμων ἄτιμος ἐκβεβλήσομαι
ὁ Κάδμος ὁ μέγας, ὃς τὸ Θηβαίων γένος
ἔσπειρα κἀξήμησα κάλλιστον θέρος.
ὦ φίλτατ' ἀνδρῶν (καὶ γὰρ οὐκέτ' ὢν ὅμως
τῶν φιλτάτων ἔμοιγ' ἀριθμήσηι, τέκνον),
οὐκέτι γενείου τοῦδε θιγγάνων χερὶ
τὸν μητρὸς αὐδῶν πατέρα προσπτύξηι, τέκνον,
λέγων· Τίς ἀδικεῖ, τίς σ' ἀτιμάζει, γέρον;
τίς σὴν ταράσσει καρδίαν λυπηρὸς ὤν;
λέγ', ὡς κολάζω τὸν ἀδικοῦντά σ', ὦ πάτερ.

You my child, you who held together
My house, born of my own daughter,
You were the terror of the city, no one would be prepared

[38] 1269-72: Ag. οὐκ οἶδα τοὔπος τοῦτο· γίγνομαι δέ πως / ἔννους, μετασταθεῖσα τῶν πάρος φρενῶν. / Κα. κλύοις ἂν οὖν τι κἀποκρίναι' ἂν σαφῶς; / Ag. ὡς ἐκλέλησμαί γ' ἃ πάρος εἴπομεν, πάτερ.

[39] See Augustine *Conf.* XI on human, historical speech and the eternal voice of god, which enters the world of time and its voices falling away.

[40] See also § 2.5 and cf. the interplay of persons near and far from the point of view of Dionysus apostrophizing himself, 849 Διόνυσε, νῦν σὸν ἔργον· οὐ γὰρ εἶ πρόσω· echoing the bacchants' words at 392-4: πόρσω / γὰρ ὅμως αἰθέρα ναίον- / τες ὁρῶσιν τὰ βροτῶν οὐρανίδαι. See also Segal, 2000 on these passages, in "Lament and Recognition: A Reconsideration of the Ending of the 'Bacchae'".

> To insult the old man seeing your head, because you would exact due punishment. Now, dishonoured am I to be cast out of my own house
> Great Kadmos, who sowed the race of Thebes
> And reaped the finest harvest.
> Oh, dearest of men, and even though you are no more,
> Still to me you will be counted with the dearest persons, child.
> No longer touching this chin of mine, with your hand
> Will you clasp me to you calling me 'mother's father', my child,
> And say, "Who injures you, who is insulting you, old man?
> Who is troubling your heart and giving you pain?
> Tell me, so that I may punish who it is that is injuring you, my father.

Pentheus had touched his mother's cheek, but she was unresponsive or *comatose* – the *kōmas*, "revel", has become a cognitive and social "deep sleep", *kōma*. In ironic symmetry with that situation, the sorrowful Kadmos here projects in this moment of *prosōpopoiia* an unrealizable, future "Pentheus", who will never touch his grandfather's responsive cheek and address him as dearest kin.

Identity in *Bacchae* is something inside always coming out and going in – connective – a continuous internalization and externalization. Just as the bacchants had celebrated the "grace of raw-flesh eating",[41] the consumption of bodies unprocessed, the maenads are themselves outside of process and time, and we witness what it has meant to be fully a person: being in self-reflexive co-presence with others, recognizing self and other, both embodied and *empsuchos.* The maenad lives in a timeless mode of pure externality, like the animal. She becomes literally, spatio-temporally *ekdēmos*, out of the city and its community. She is also cognitively *phroudē*, absent. The competency of persons, their agency, it has become evident, consists in this social and cognitive faculty. This faculty situates others and self in responsive relation and recognizes the likeness of self and other: the identity or sameness of persons with themselves. Agauē's madness has been an extreme version of the flutteriness of spirit – "Is this fluttering still present in your spirit [*psuchē*]? – which had marked Pentheus, when first he was seen approaching[42]. They have been too entirely *thumos*, too flutteringly *psychos* or too vacuously *demas*, "body", "frame". A person is someone with whom co-presence can be shared, someone who says, "you and me are feeling, thinking, enjoying, watching the same thing", to paraphrase Teiresias, 189: ταὔτ' ἐμοὶ πάσχεις ἄρα.

[41] 138-9: ἀγρεύων / αἷμα τραγοκτόνον, ὠμοφάγον χάριν.

[42] Kadmos of Pentheus in the first episode, 214: ὡς ἐπτόηται· τί ποτ' ἐρεῖ νεώτερον; Kadmos to Agauē in the last, 1268: τὸ δὲ πτοηθὲν τόδ' ἔτι σῇι ψυχῇι πάρα;

Count no one happy until they are dead, runs the proverbial Greek wisdom expressed famously in Herodotus but also shaping Tragic fate, as exemplified in such figures as Oedipus and Kadmos. This notion finds a subtle development in *Bacchae*. Here we cannot count happy or unhappy, lucky or unlucky anyone while they are *there*. The existence which is sufficient is not a minimal condition, having a body with breath in it, subsistence or merely being alive, it means more than that. It means *knowing* you are alive, knowing you are there amongst others who also have this knowledge. This is brought into relief in *Bacchae* in this scene between Kadmos and his daughter, lost to bacchic possession. She seems alive but is not in fact present, *not there*, 1259-62[43].

Properly speaking, only in the condition of cognizance can a person be tragic, and only a tragic person is a full person having agency. In them alone do distinctions between good fortune and bad make sense, for to them alone does anything really have meaning. A forensic-legal, constitutional or normative conception of person and agency does not determine or explain the complex picture of personhood one finds on the Attic stage. Euripides' in *Bacchae* is experimental and innovative, handling the riddle of personhood with as much sophistication as he does the riddle of desire and will.

6.2.1 *Horōn Horōnta*[44]: Co-presence is Face-to-Face Encounter

The mask is a social prosthetic. In *Bacchae* humans stream to the mountains, they go by foot not in a carriage. Because it gives the god more honour to do so, they renounce the body's prosthetics (such is a vehicle[45]), and take up the god's *skeuē*, paraphernalia, instruments with non-practical purposes[46]. The natural prosthetics, *skeuē*, of the god's *teletai* – consummatory

[43] See § 2.6 p. 122 for text and translation.

[44] "Seeing him, seeing me", 470.

[45] Vehicle to the mountain: 191-2, see § 3.3.1 n. 132.

[46] Identification (the function of a uniform to exclude and include, both to mark persons off both in their own eyes and in those of others) may be argued to be a very practical purpose. But I mean "non-practical" in the sense that they are not instruments for the accomplishment of a further *telos* but the *telos* in themselves; they "point" only to themselves so to speak, as traces of Dionysiac wisdom, which in Aristotle is *phronēsis* "knowledge of how to secure the ends of life", Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1140a 24- b 30. This is distinct from wisdom that is *poiēton* or *prakton* in which there is always a goal to bring something else into being. Dionysiac *skeuē,* Dionysiac indexes and signs "come into being", are "not brought into being": their origin is not "in the maker", they are not objects of contrivance or consideration (τὸ τεχνάζειν καὶ θεωρεῖν) as in *poiēsis*, see Arist. *Eth. Nich*. 1140a. Dionysiac wisdom in *Bacchae*, of which bacchic paraphernalia is expressive or the presence of which their ritual equipment indexes, is very close to Aristotelian *phronēsis*, which is "concerned with the good life". It is the advantage of the person with the capacity for deliberation, *bouleusis,* Cf. Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1140a 30-1 ὥστε καὶ ὅλως ἂν εἴη φρόνιμος ὁ βουλευτικός. Aristotelian *phronēsis* is sustained by that most highly regarded of virtues in *Bacchae*, *Sōphrosunē* [see throughout *Bacchae*: 314, 316, 329, 504, 641, 686, 940, 1002, 1150, 1341 and 386-94]: ἔνθεν καὶ τὴν σωφροσύνην τούτῳ προσαγορεύομεν τῷ ὀνόματι, ὡς σῴζουσαν τὴν φρόνησιν, 1140a 11-13. It preserves or maintains the faculty of judgement, σῴζει δὲ τὴν τοιαύτην ὑπόληψιν: moral judgement that is, the judgement of "what is to be done", how to act, τὰς περὶ τὸ πρακτόν (1140b. 15-16). *Phronēsis* is what it takes to do

rites – displace the tools, *technai*, of human purposiveness, *telē*. His *teletai* transform the relation of persons to time, their identity in time: they will become initiated and consummated through adopting these, inducted into new "forms of life". Human *telē* are aims for changing things and circumstances, not the quality of the person or its relation to things and purposes. Time, it seems, is not something "out there", but something between persons and worked out through their co-present bodies – it is relational and cannot be subjected to human technical ingenuity and its habitual manners of aiming and handling *telos*. Dionysus transforms time because he transforms relations.

The timeless gods are not only looking down from afar, 392-4. Dionysus, and Zeus before him, penetrate the historical *durée* and come into the social midst of human life; they become momentarily co-present, 1-2: Ἥκω Διὸς παῖς τήνδε Θηβαίαν χθόνα/Διόνυσος. The mask is a face with that especially useful quality possessed by hair, it is detachable and identifying: it is a link between acts and identity or character – a link *stretched* between acts and moments, it constitutes experience *as time*, binding past to present. The Greek theatrical mask is, judging by the many depictions on vases, more of a head, complete with hair, than just a visage, viz. not a surface but a three dimensional object, effectively a container for the actor's head, as noted above. When Dionysus is present, humans let down their guard. They are released from social alertness – they may "let down their hair", as one says. They also set aside or lose control of that mutable mask, which is the human face (with this god it happens whether voluntarily or involuntarily, as we have seen). Driven out of mind means to be no longer 'inside one's face',[47] to become *unhoused*, to be a person exiled from the body's house, 32-3:

> τοιγάρ νιν αὐτὰς ἐκ δόμων ὤιστρησ' ἐγὼ
> μανίαις, ὄρος δ' οἰκοῦσι παράκοποι φρενῶν,[48]
>
> Therefore have I stung them to frenzy out of their houses
> raving, and they inhabit the mountain, driven out of mind.

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what Pentheus failed to do, to "hold together houses", ξυνέχει δώματα 392, 1302 ff., e.g. 1308-9: ὦι δῶμ' ἀνέβλεφ', ὃς συνεῖχες, ὦ τέκνον, / τοὐμὸν μέλαθρον, παιδὸς ἐξ ἐμῆς γεγώς. Pericles and men like him are said to have *phronēsis* "because they can see what is good for themselves and what is good for men in general; we consider that those who can do this are good at managing households or states", 1140b 7-11. Dionysus' *skeuē*, like his presence and the kind of wisdom honoured when he is honoured is an end in itself – its only end is its presence, its being there, when it is manifest it is already consummated, ἔστι γὰρ αὐτὴ ἡ εὐπραξία τέλος, 1140b 7.
With the running contrast between technical and somatic, contrived and spontaneous, it is notable that Pentheus is said to only "think that his tongue is a smoothly turning machine"; when he is only sick, there are no contents in his words, 268-9: σὺ δ' εὔτροχον μὲν γλῶσσαν ὡς φρονῶν ἔχεις, / ἐν τοῖς λόγοισι δ' οὐκ ἔνεισί σοι φρένες.

[47] Similarly, in colloquial English, to be 'off one's face' means to be completely inebriated.

[48] Also 36: ἐξέμηνα δωμάτων.

The maenad is a model of the asocial, the "desocialized" actor. She has lost self-consciousness and consciousness of others. She is an intensified, dramatic picture of what constitutes both sickness and, *a contrario*, health. The competent social actor is self-reflexive. Its face is an instrument of either communication or deception, and countless nuances between on a highly differentiated spectrum of meanings. A competent actor (adult, self-aware, feeling shame, having language, interpretive of and sensitive to situations) is a creature of *tact*, responsive and perpetually monitoring self and other in its interactions.

There is in all social interactions between competent social actors a kind of tension. This tension is relieved on those private or ritualized occasions, when one may let down one's guard, when consciousness and the social, cognitive reflexes of mutual monitoring can for a time be released: when one is at home; in the *symposion*; the revel, *kōmas* – wherever wine is shared, social guard relaxed and self-regard less watchful, when actors have any kind of permission to become more spontaneous and less deliberating. One becomes relaxed and thus in a state for a different quality of *attention*, on just those occasions when one can say "you are feeling the same things as me", as Teiresias says to Kadmos, 189: ταὔτ' ἐμοὶ πάσχεις ἄρα. This social tension is what Goffman and Giddens called "a sort of 'controlled alertness'"[49]. Dionysus's gift, which is not prosthetic, not "put on" but put *in* (it 'fills' the imbiber of wine: ὅταν πλησθῶσιν ἀμπέλου ῥοῆς, 281) is the substance which has such a powerful, *loosening*, unbinding effect on the mysterious property called mind – *nóos*, or what is inside the body, *phrenes* – the cognitive faculty through which identity, social personhood and agency are constituted, continuously dissolved and, in turn, re-constituted.

Presence of mind is a necessary condition for viable social interactions. Presence of mind in the social context always means presence of *minds*. Even in solitude, a competent person, because self-reflexive, is not one always unitary mind but *minds*: a mind conscious of 'itself', being not a unit but, in moments of reflection and the interpersonal reflection of discourse, unified, binding itself together, projecting and thereby constituting itself *qua self*. Being present means knowing one is present and that others "know" identically. In encounters, competent actors must not only have but also show they have this reflexivity, a kind of cognitive discretion: "actors have to 'exhibit presence'"[50]. Absence and presence of mind and their social (and therefore, in Tragedy, existential) costs, are what is revealed in this drama

[49] Giddens, 1984: 79.

[50] Giddens, 1984: 79. See Giddens' interesting pages on the psychotic and the incompetent social actor, Giddens, 1984: 64-7, 78-80. As with the autist in Tomasello's work, (Tomasello, 1999: 56-93, esp. 76-7 and 189-90) we learn a great deal about what is "required" of persons and the nature of their interacting from observing broken or deficient interactions, see also Baron-Cohen, 1997. The same may be said of Tragedy, from which the audience may learn a great deal about what healthy minds and behaviour would constitute in the vision of persons who have not avoided tragedy because they have been too instrumental, too zombie-like, too unsympathetic or solipsistic.

of the god, whose meaning inheres in his *parousia*, presence[51], whose mindful or mindless bacchants (this is an essential ambiguity) celebrate the higher value of attending to what is at hand, the present: *ta paronta*.

Tragedy is a microsociological form[52]. Fundamental in it is the problem of "face", which is also a key concept with the father of microsociology, Erving Goffman[53]. Goffman reads social situations dramaturgically, with his lexicon of "interactions, encounters, performances, roles"[54]. Persons monitor one another, monitor themselves, monitor their situations and, when they are socially competent, are constantly "working" to save the face of their interlocutor and of themselves – this is their "tact". The delicateness of relations, the breakdown of encounters and the coming undone of roles is precisely what we find in Greek Tragedy. Tragic persons are angular, "squares", in a world of ongoing frictions, one that would be better served by the personal "roundness" that would make the social context and its interactions smoother[55]. Social friction is ineradicable and "roundness", or the smoothing out of difference accomplished extraordinarily by Dionysus, only ever a temporary utopia. Dionysus' utopia is temporal not spatial. Dionysus' regular, rhythmic festivals and the mood that marks his presence is in every sense a social *amnesty*: losing memory, *mnēmē*, losing mindfulness entails gaining a temporary liberation from the tension and abrasiveness of the historical *durée*[56]. In Euripides' vision, Dionysus, wine god and *pharmakon*, which alone smoothes out social distinctions, is the god who brings the only relief from the cares and

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[51] *Parousia*: The notion of the epiphanic presence of Dionysus is, according to Henrichs, one of Otto's most fruitful contributions and finds its further development most notably in the "Parisian Dionysus of Jean-Pierre Vernant [1969] and . . . Detienne". *Parousia*, "presence", is the term used by Diodorus Siculus (4.3.3.5-7 τὰς δὲ γυναῖκας κατὰ συστήματα θυσιάζειν τῷ θεῷ καὶ βακχεύειν καὶ καθόλου τὴν παρουσίαν ὑμνεῖν τοῦ Διονύσου) for that which belongs to Dionysus which "the women of the Greek cities" hymn. It is preferable to "epiphany" for Detienne, 1986. See Henrichs in *Masks*: 31 nn. 45-46. For a recent discussion of epiphany in *Bacchae,* see Marcías Otero in Bernabé, 2013: 329-48. The *parousia* of Dionysus is indeed, as Henrichs eloquently shows, a vital part of the meaning of Dionysus. That he *is* there is the spark of life that kindles the drama of *Bacchae*. The reader of *Bacchae* will see this patently and ought to connect this central fact to the bacchantic morality expressed at 395-9, where retaining those things "present at hand", *ta paronta*, is hymned as an absolute value unto itself, distinct from the values of those who mindlessly pursue the unrealistic and do not think thoughts appropriate for mortals, 397-9: ἐπὶ τούτωι / δὲ τίς ἂν μεγάλα διώκων / τὰ παρόντ' οὐχὶ φέροι;. See also 3.3 n. 137. Cf. the great lines of Pindar at Pi. *Pyth.* 3. 58-62: "Men should seek from the gods only what is consistent with mortal minds, / Knowing what lies before our feet, and the nature of our destiny. / Do not, my soul, long for an immortal life, / but make the most of what you can realistically achieve." (trans. Verity, 2007).

[52] Giddens, 1984: 68. Erving Goffman, developing the notion of "social action" in Max Weber, is most strongly associated with the notion of "microsociology", the sociology of life as it is lived by the body, in encounters and interactions, not only the sociology of systems and ideologies.

[53] "The primacy of the face as a medium of expression and of communication has moral implications, many of which are very acutely teased out by Goffman.", Giddens, 1984: 67.

[54] See Goffman, 1959: 15-16 and § 4.3.7 n. 160.

[55] By roundness I mean also the amenability, *eutrepes*, of persons who see not only the one face of their fellows, but assume those have depth and volume and something over the horizon of the present face turned toward them. On Dionysus and "amenability" see § 3.3.1 n. 132, § 3.3.2 n. 49. For Abba Matoes' remarks, see above, § 4.2.1 p. 240.

[56] See Mazzaro, 1993 on memory and forgetting in *Bacchae*.

travails of the *durée* of day-to-day life[57]. That relief is one that slackens the social alertness ordinarily essential for the functioning of society. As Goffman interpreted social life through by dramaturgy of "encounters", so may we fruitfully also approach Tragic Drama, through a sociology of human interactions[58].

To his credit, Goffman's sociology – and Giddens' work, which drew upon it – founds itself upon a sensitivity to the social world as one of embodied presences and such a sensitivity will always be most fruitful in the interpretation of drama[59]. Human life unfolds in a milieu of visual presence, it is always *local*. In Goffman's sociological work two themes are essential: "the control of the body in fields of action in co-presence" and "the pervasive influence of face"[60]. The two, of course, are entangled with one another. Giddens conscripts Goffman's notion of co-presence which is defined as: "anchored in the perceptual and communicative modalities of the body. What Goffman calls 'the full conditions of co-presence' are found whenever agents 'sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and *close enough to be perceived in this sense of being perceived*."[61].

The social context is one of complex mutual surveillance or "monitoring", to use Giddens' term. It is a highly reflexive context. The social self is one not at all like a thing or an ordinary object, but determined by the idea that a subject has of itself and that its co-presents have of it[62]. Tact, *sōphrosunē,* and the amenability, *eutrepes*, demonstrated by Dionysus and the servants of Pentheus[63]; discretion, *aidōs*; face, *timē* – these are wanting or corrupted in the social world of Dionysus' Theatre and in our play.

In *Bacchae* we have experienced a revenge Tragedy and as most often the case with vengeance, the debt to be repaid in this vendetta is a debt of honour or face revindicated[64]. The consciousness of others and of self in the eyes of others, and of others seen as identically

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[57] Only relief: 282-3: ὕπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν κακῶν / δίδωσιν, οὐδ' ἔστ' ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων. 381-3: ἀποπαῦσαί τε μερίμνας, / ὁπόταν βότρυος ἔλθηι / γάνος ἐν δαιτὶ θεῶν.

[58] On the sociology of Tragedy, see Hall, 1997.

[59] On the body in social interpretation, see esp. Giddens, 1984: 64-73.

[60] Giddens, 1984: 67.

[61] Giddens, 1984: 67, my emphasis.

[62] Giddens, 1984: 64-5, "The body, Merleau-Ponty points out, does not 'occupy' time-space in exactly the same sense as material objects do. . .". Merleau-Ponty, 1945: 114, "Le contour de mon corps est une frontière que les relations d'espace ordinaires ne franchissent pas.".

[63] These are the necessary conditions for the mutuality or reciprocity on which everything depends in human situations, the gentleness that belongs to human *politesse,* the domesticated world, is paradoxically the mark of the hunted down Dionysus who is *praos* "kind", "gentle". For his amenability – *eutrepes* – see § 3.3.1 n. 132, § 3.3.2 n. 49 and *gentleness* see 436-7: ὁ θὴρ δ' ὅδ' ἡμῖν πρᾶος οὐδ' ὑπέσπασεν / φυγῆι πόδ', cf. also "most gentle/sweet/mild", 861: δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος.

[64] Incur a debt of revenge: 516-18; ἄγω τὸν ὑμᾶς κἀμὲ τἀμά τ' ὄργια/ γέλων τιθέμενον· ἀλλὰ τιμωρεῖσθέ νιν. 1080-1.

conscious, is the mark of the social world of adults, when these are fully competent agents. Giddens defined face with recourse to Ernest Becker's formulation as follows:

> But the self has to submit to social engagement, given that this is done with proper deference to the tactful recognition of the needs of others. The infant does not yet know this, nor its connection with face. Face as Becker puts it, is 'the positive feeling of self-warmth turned to the world for others' scrutiny and potential sabotage'.[65]

"The positive feeling of self-warmth", "scrutiny" and "sabotage": these have been the thwarted feelings, the deeds and events of *Bacchae*. Dionysus' great gift to humans is that happy co-efficient of frictionless mutuality available through the sympotic and komastic context, moments of special inter-subjectivity. That we may rightly call a "positive feeling of self-warmth", it is a social emotion as the self is a social phenomenon. In *Bacchae* the denial of Dionysiac reciprocity and the required recognition and equality with others has caused a breakdown. It has made of Pentheus and the Thebes for which he speaks, a scrutinizer who has himself not recognized the need for self-scrutiny. Like his mother and aunts, Pentheus has failed to want to be a participant in a healthily intersubjective community that, in Dionysiac well-being, becomes bound together in consubjective unity[66].

In the spectacle of Pentheus' dissipated "self-presence", we have learnt the meaning of Dionysiac co-presence. The king has been tactless with a divine social agent, whose *performance* he has not understood[67]. His story is one of sabotage – *lochos* – but Dionysus, the *impersonator*, has been the ultimate saboteur, who has shown that Pentheus' sabotaging has in fact been his *own* undoing. It is a lack of indispensable "alertness" that we may impute to Pentheus.

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[65] Giddens, 1984: Chapter 2 "Consciousness, Self and Social Encounters", 54. He is citing from Becker's *The Birth and Death of Meaning* (New York, 1962). Also: "Moreover, most (all?) societies tend to recognize a linguistic similarity between the face as a term referring to physiognomy and face as concerning the maintenance of self-esteem.", Giddens, 1984: 67. On the infant and its cognitive development, which reveals so much about the nature of mature, comepetent agency, see Tomasello, 1999, esp. on the so-called "Nine Month Revolution".

[66] Instead of *paredros*, "seated next to", as at a *symposion*; *sunemporos* "companion", [57]; *summetechōn chorois*, "joining in dancing" [63] *symmachos*, an ally, "Mitkämpfer" [1343].

[67] "A 'performance' may be defined as all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants. Taking a particular participant and his performance as a basic point of reference, we may refer to those who contribute the other performances as the audience, observers, co-participants.", Goffman, 1959: 15-16.

6.2.2 Subject as Object of a Moment

Even *person*, in the mutability and plasticity of face, even the *subject itself*, can become the object of intentions. That is the premise, after all, on which philosophy as therapy can come about. Subjectivity itself – so this theatre reveals and teaches us – can become an object of attention. "Yourself" is some thing you can come to "know". Like all objects, (things we have separated sufficiently from ourselves that we can operate upon them or submit them to inspection), subjectivity and its identity can become modified, transformed and also counterfeited and manipulated. In doing so, of course, the view point and the point viewed become changed, since they are essentially different postures of the same entity.

Just so is the mask in the theatre an object submitted to prior or ulterior intention. For person has this unstable, slippery – *sphales* – character: it depends on its apprehending. It is not *there* but constituted through relating. The mask is something like a kind of technology – a ritual, aesthetic and sociological prosthetic – by which, as through so many kinds of technology, the nature of the human subject, becomes re-articulated, a thing now as dynamic and fungible as "things" become when they are discrete and submitted to the intentions of agents, a materialized projection, the objectivisation of subjectivity itself. The god's being is mental: his identity, as something mental, is not something in space and time in the way that objects are. His identity is immaterial and can take any number of outward forms. Dionysus and the problems associated with mortal experience of him, activate and illuminate the *epistemic* and ontological riddles and complexity of personhood, divine and mortal.

The sufficient condition of personhood is something like the possession of a property, which is like an absence that becomes momentarily present when we look for it. Pentheus had not understood what he was, who he was, what his life was. He is reduced to remnants of a body and carried back on stage, a mask, the mere shell of the person. "He" was not his body, though, as a living human being, his bodily presence was a necessary condition of his person. "He" is not the mask brought back in. What was Pentheus, then, who was he and what was the nature of his life and identity? It was the combination of certain elements and something more than the sum of its parts. It was quality of the relation between his parts and between Pentheus and those around him.

The uncanny, dancing spark in Pentheus that bound his acts to his body and his person, through talk, to other persons, has been revealed in its complex nature – something as dynamic and immaterial as fire, some property, which like fire, also makes other things malleable and, like fire, is usually the sure sign of human sociality or divine contact in the

epiphany of lightning. The invisible property of mind has been dramatized and ingeniously "manifested" without ever having been "seen". Rather than a seed or 'spark' hidden in some mysterious depths, it has been the little flame of fire dancing around the human head, breath, language, laughter, all traces or natural signs of its living agency.

Dionysus takes on a human body and a human nature, as humans put on prostheses. At Thebes he does so for the same reason as humans usually take up implements, not to enter more fully into more meaningful relations with others, but for the accomplishment of his *telos*, which in this case is revenge. The mask is not an instrument to create the illusion that something is "there", that there are "*further realities lying behind it*,"[68] but because the face of the mask, minimal as it is, with lines and holes in the right compositional relation, shape and dimensions, is the sufficient condition for social interaction. We never know what or if there are further realities lying behind it, but we engage with faces and even masks, prosthetic faces, *as if* there were.

[68] "In short, Dionysus' mask, by becoming ambiguous, comes to owe its interest not simply to what it formally represents in a way characteristic of the normal tragic masking convention, but to "*the further realities lying behind it*," the invisible forces that unite the benign and destructive aspects represented by the single sign of the god's smiling mask.", Foley, 1980: 129.

6.3.1 *Prosōpon*: Face, Prop, Mask, Masque

τίνος πρόσωπον δῆτ' ἐν ἀγκάλαις ἔχεις;[69]

ἔτι δὲ κυριωτέρα περὶ τὴν ἀπεργασίαν τῶν ὄψεων ἡ τοῦ σκευοποιοῦ τέχνη τῆς τῶν ποιητῶν ἐστιν.[70]

And, futhermore, with regard to *mise en scène* the art of the mask-maker is more powerful than that od the poets.

Alfred Gell was most penetrating on art, the relationship of humans to their creations and its significance. Gods (idols, iconic and aniconic; effigies; masks) no differently than "art objects" (icons, paintings, statues, masks: indexes), articulate human agentfulness and personhood. They express the insoluble reality of the sociality – the entanglement – that characterizes all human doings. The mask of Dionysus, its worship in cult as much as its ambiguity in the theatre, reveals, primarily, a fact about human beings:

> Humanity has a lien on God because his objectification is in their hands. Even if God is the ultimate author of his resemblance in the form of magnificent structures and works of art, it remains the case that, at a critical point in the sequence of causes, instruments and results, human agency is essential. Since, in this world, God's presence is inherent in these works of human agency, he is bound to human purposes, the this-worldly prosperity and other-worldly salvation of his ostensible servants, rather than to purposes entirely his own. *His agency is enmeshed in ours, by virtue of our capacity to make (and be) his simulacrum.*[71]

Much excellent work has already been done on the face and the mask, both in *Bacchae* and with regard to Dionysus more broadly. We need, therefore, only underline some points pertinent to the argument for *Bacchae* as presenting, in its proliferation of "natural signs", something like an alternative to semiosis and the strategies of reading and structural analysis they have elicited[72].

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[69] 1277: "Whose face then do you have in your arms?"

[70] Arist. *Poet.* 1450b. 17-20.

[71] Gell, 1998: 114.

[72] The work of Foley, Halliwell, Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux and Chaston stand out: Foley, (1980): "The Masque of Dionysus". Vernant, 1985: *La mort dans les yeux: figures de l'Autre en Grèce ancienne – Artémis, Gorgô* ; Vernant & Vidal-Naquet 1986 offers three pertinent essays on the subject: "Le dieu de la fiction tragique"; "Figures du masque en Grèce ancienne", Vernant & Frontisi-Ducroux; and "Le Dionysos masqué des *Bacchantes* d'Euripide"; Schlesier's "Mixtures of Masks: Maenads as Tragic Models" in *Masks*: 89-114; also

Foley, in an influential paper, took up the helpful terms in John Jones' *On Aristotle and Greek Tragedy*. Euripides, wrote Jones, is uniquely marked by the techniques in his drama of "mask-exploiting" and "mask piercing"[73]. For Jones the mask and its handling in *Bacchae* were "modern", highly original and instantiating the greatness of the play, which "rests in a vivid spirituality". He sees that Euripides' handling of masks is unique and represents an innovative challenge to the normal Attic, dramatic conventions[74]. A most productive idea in Jones, is that of absence, which Euripides has engaged in his inspired handling of Dionysus' mask, this adopted *morphē* and the meaningful adaptability of form exhibited in this scenario. Vivid it is indeed, a bright absence, like that luminous pillar from which issues the voice of the god in the violent and strange culmination of the play, 1082-85:

> καὶ ταῦθ' ἅμ' ἠγόρευε καὶ πρὸς οὐρανὸν
> καὶ γαῖαν ἐστήριζε φῶς σεμνοῦ πυρός.
> σίγησε δ' αἰθήρ, σῖγα δ' ὕλιμος νάπη
> φύλλ' εἶχε, θηρῶν δ' οὐκ ἂν ἤκουσας βοήν.
>
> And even while he was saying this, both into the sky
> And in the earth stood a column of light of awesome fire.
> The *aithēr* was silent, the forest valley held
> Every leaf in quiet, you heard the voice of no creature.[75]

Frontisi-Ducroux, 1995, a full-length study of the topic. Segal, 1997 [1982], discusses the mask extensively from the point of view of his metatragic interpretation of *Bacchae*, see esp. his chp. 7 pp. 215-71. See also "Der Maskengott" in *Athenissche Mitteilungen* Walther Wrede, (Berlin, 1928); and "Das Symbol der Maske" in *Dionysos,* Otto, 1933: 80-5; Detienne, 1986; Henrichs in *Masks*: esp. 31-9. Wyles in Stuttard: 68-9. A recent contribution, from a cognitive perspective germane to much in the approach of the present study is Colleen Chaston's *Tragic props and cognitive function: aspects of the function of images in thinking*, Chaston, 2010: Chp. 3 "The mask of Dionysus: Euripides' *Bakkhai*", 179-238, esp. 180-91. See also Larson, 2016: 111.

[73] ". . . a whole range of mask-piercing and even, at the end of his life, mask-exploiting effects (the smiling mask of the Stranger in *Bacchantes* is meant to be inscrutable; it is a modern mask) declares Euripides' huge originality. In fact, the greatness of *Bacchantes* rests in a vivid spirituality, which we encounter in three or four earlier plays . . ." Jones, 1968: 270.

[74] "Jones argues that Euripides' career is uniquely marked by a whole range of 'mask-piercing' and 'mask-exploiting' effects which challenge the ancient masking convention. Euripides 'pierces' masks by creating conflicts between a character's internal state and his role in the action of the drama.", Foley, 1980: 128. See also Foley, 1985: 246-54.

[75] Dodds on 1082-3 "And as the voice spoke these words, a light of awful fire was set betwixt heaven and earth", and 1084-5: "The high air went still (σίγησε aor.), and the woody glade held its leaves in stillness, and you could not have heard the cry of any beast." He comments on these lines that they "describe wonderfully the hush of nature at the moment when the pent-up forces of the supernatural break through . . . Stillness is the traditional response of nature to divine epiphany: Ar. *Av.* 777 f. . . . *Thesm.* 42. ff.". The control of movement and stillness, sound and silence, vision and the invisible (presence and absence of phenomena and the phenomenon of person) is the main instrument of the poet, whose purpose is to reveal truth and elicit emotion through effects and lead the audience from effects back to causes and their significance. The tension and release, the contrast of values and assimilation of difference is the rhythm that becomes manifest when Dionysus is at hand, or may be. He is the god of the drama of presence, something so fundamental as is appreciated by infants in the game of peekaboo (see Freud on object constancy and the meaning of the game he observed his nephew Ernst play with his mother, Freud, 1920:

In *Bacchae* what we find are figurations not of "vivid spiritualities" but something more "at hand" – *ta paronta* – something elusive but not vague and that is *person* and its defining element, *mind*, the necessary condition of the intelligible social agent, the element without which a person is only an object or zombie. Personhood does not consist in a substance or a form or a manikin that can be lodged in space, Euripides' vision suggests, but in something so immaterial as absence itself: in a *relation*. Hence it is that mind, intentional identity, can stand outside of time, being a relation that can be mediated symbolically.

6.3.2 Identity as the Capacity for Change of Identity

Dionysus can change form, but his mask-face and posture and person are unchanging as historical, mortal faces and persons are not. The divine *attitude* is fixed, as a smile on a mask, as ambiguous and opaque, concealing undiscerned motivations. Human attitude is like human talk or laughter, *cedit et succedit*[76]; its condition is that of constant change – it comes out and falls away. This perpetual dwindling of mortals is also a facet of their great potentiality: it is what leads them to exploring themselves as entities having and obtaining depth and *dimension*, since having not infinite temporal *extension*.

Humans are ethically plastic, mutable. Pentheus had identified the bacchant rites as *plastos* 218, "specious" and its instigator as meretricious. He sees the Stranger as having a certain look, contrived in the manner that he understands humans contrive to have certain appearances, 453-9. Later he will be the one whose look is modified, his aspect changed in the way that humans do so, having not the god's capacity for effortless self-transformation, 925-36. Dionysus, on the other hand, is not *shown* changing. We have taken his word for it that he is a god who has adopted human form and a man's nature, but we never witness any transformation of the divine figure, as we both hear narrated and see the effects of the reduction of Pentheus from a whole to disconnected parts. The Stranger, explains the commodious servant who first brings him to Pentheus, "did not change" but was constant, 438-40.[77]

Jenseits des Lustprinzips and Piaget, 1937: *La construction du réel chez l'enfant*, and § 4.1 n. 20). With Dionysus object permanence finds its dramatic, illuminated *pendant* in person impermanence. The super-natural deploys very human-like cognitive strategies of self-dramatization and revelation.

[76] See Augustine *Conf.* XI. 7, for human speech, *vox transitoria*, distinguished from God's divine speech which is eternal but enters history, *vox aeterna*.

[77] See p. 82 for translation and text, also p. 270.

The meaning of Dionysus changes as the circumstances change, but he sits calmly unchanged in appearance[78]. Humans have changed because meanings have accumulated and changed. The god of commotions and joyful mobility is still what he always was. We learn about the constant shifting and reshaping of perspective, the plasticity of the mind (its being protean, transformable, *plaston*) in our encounter with other minds and most paradigmatically with the mind of this person, Dionysus, who dissolves mindfulness, whose face seems to laugh throughout, a laughter the meaning of which constantly changes. His smile becomes the animacy of laughter when he moves in the temporally dynamic context of human co-presence.

Foley thought that the manipulability of form and therefore apparent identity, which belongs to Dionysus but does not to Pentheus, serves to mark the difference between mortal and immortal[79], that immortal controls access to its identity much more efficiently and masterfully than the mortal. We are to *deduce* something defining about the difference between mortal and god – a fact, part of our body of knowledge is here confirmed by particular events. Yet the lesson may be not just that there is this fundamental difference, which we ought to learn to discriminate, between mortal and immortal persons. It may also induce the new knowledge that we are apprehending an absence when we engage with persons; that personhood, on which for humans, everything depends, is a quality or property that frustrates the conventional means of seeing, identifying and knowing, when these are conceived as a kind of holding or redeeming from the strong current, and its complex under-currents, of time's flux.

There is a bond between the two aspects of the mask in *Bacchae* – the simultaneously representing and misrepresenting visage – and that thread is an immaterial one. It is a thread which Dionysus draws describing himself, and which we draw. We connect one act to another or we seem to discern the connection. This threading is the stuff of agency. It is the thread of intention and constitutes that intentional identity, which is the person we call Dionysus. In *Bacchae* we are being implicitly encouraged to abduct in the movement

[78] Foley describes the function and meaning of Dionysus' mask in *Bacchae* to both represent and misrepresent: to the audience to whom the prologue is addressed it represents a god disguised as a man; to the actors on stage it represents a mortal fellow. It invites misprision: "The mask, then, represents the god to the audience, misrepresents him to the characters and, as we will now see in more detail, in the final scene the mask must be interpreted as an artifact or symbol representing the god, or as much as we, or the characters, can ever visually and directly experience of him." Foley, 1980: 129.

[79] This division is at the heart of the meaning of *Bacchae:* "The visual juxtaposition of the masks here also becomes a precise theatrical expression of the division between divine and human nature that lies at the heart of the play.", Foley, 1980: 130; and, "By reducing Pentheus to his tragic mask, and by allowing Dionysus to exploit his mask in an extraordinary way, Euripides demonstrates through theatrical convention the nature of the division between god and man." Foley, 1980: 131. On the distinction god-mortal and its articulation in the person and proximity of Dionysus, see Henrichs in *Masks*: 13-43.

between the *x* of the manifest identity and the *y* of the concealed identity, which becomes later revealed: the uncanny, ineffable *Rule of Dionysus*. This is the ironically uncodifiable rule of the reality and presence of his otherwise invisible or vanishing, hard-to-detect and often refuted divine personhood.

Here is not a lesson – *mathos* – about some supposed substantial quality of reality in Dionysus, so much as a relocation of identity, even its dispersion. That not easily found quality is "de-placed". Neither is it on the surface nor immanent in some inexhaustible depth or "further realities". Personal identity *seems* to "reside" outside of space-time, it has the quality of absence, something, call it a flashing *space*, between things[80]. And yet human person does not stand out of space-time, embodied presence being its sufficient condition. Human person is this paradoxical condition of embodied presence bound together – *sunthentes logon*[81] – through a fiction, a thread of identity or an identifying thread, transcending space-time and linking past self to present instantiation and future self.

We use these spatio-temporal metaphors as circumventions to get around the problem of "something" which is not "there", in the habitual way that we have for formulating things and negotiating the time-space in which we embodied persons exist. We talk and act as if what constitutes the mind were the "contents" of a person, and so perhaps we must. *Bacchae* is an interpretation and dramatization of the nature of and recognizing of personhood, mind and agency *an sich*. It is not only a case of mortal versus immortal agency, but of agency *tout court*.

In this relocation of person – really a terminal dislocation, a scattering or dispersion like a divinatory smoke – Euripides has not only re-affirmed divinity and the difference between mortal and god. He has re-articulated person and its locateability. The Euripidean "piercing" and "exploiting" of masks addressed by Jones and Foley is deeply significant. It is an expression of that social and ethical problem, with which Euripides often confronted himself and his audience (and his brilliant handling of which finds it culmination in Dionysus in *Bacchae*): the self, identity, intention, these are malleable, dissimulable and not easy of evaluation. They are both the affordances of communication and of miscommunication, they express intentions, truths and facts but also falsified intentions, counterfeitures and impostures.

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[80] That the gods exist outside of time-space, in a condition similar to thought itself, is expressed the Homeric Hymn to Apollo, where the god is said to move at the speed of a "thought", *nóēma*, *Hymn. Hom. in Apollinem*, 186-7: ἔνθεν δὲ πρὸς Ὄλυμπον ἀπὸ χθονὸς ὥς τε νόημα/ εἶσι Διὸς πρὸς δῶμα θεῶν μεθ' ὁμήγυριν ἄλλων.

[81] 297.

6.3.3 Dionysus *qua* Mask

In the final scene of *Bacchae* we see Dionysus in the machine. He is wearing the same mask, which now we see differently; he has shuffled off his disguise, but looks no different. Identity, then, is not the same thing as appearance. His disguise it may be said has consisted simply in the cloak of ignorance that has covered not him but the perspectives on him. It has been a subjective rather than an objective concealment. We have accepted his divinity throughout. In a different way we accept it again, but now as much also because he is speaking from the *daemonic* perspective over the stage, which the *theologeion* represents. Up to now it has been "indirectly and symbolically" that we have accepted Dionysus' divine identity, in a manner that entailed our accepting that we could not "see" the *actual* Dionysus. The action of the play stands in tension with this final epiphany, so Foley argued, for now we do "see" the actual Dionysus as god, yet in the *same* mask.

The mask has a ritual power to make present the god. Such power the mask in the last scene too possesses, Foley suggests. It makes visible that which mortals cannot see. Yet, we may argue, it is not only divine identity that mortals cannot "see". It is *all* identity. Human selves are as invisible as divine ones; through the same techniques – indirect, symbolic, allusive, inferential – do they become inferred. Foley argues that the action of the play up to the final scene "demonstrates the god's divinity indirectly and symbolically and denies that we can adequately 'see' Dionysus with human vision."[82] Yet everything that is considered most valuable in human life, certainly it seems in Euripides' view, is exactly so hard of seeing and verifying.

Tragedy principally shows acts, as Aristotle makes a point of explaining in his *Poetics*, not characters. Tragedy is also fundamentally ethical, affective and pathetic. The audience is counted on to connect acts to one another in a web of significance and to infer meanings and values from these acts performed before them. *Ēthos* is what a person always does; it is statistical, like *parole*, so we say that person is likely to do that again or act in a similar way in different situations and, inversely, when we see someone acting and speaking in a certain fashion, we say such and such is the *character*, by which we may predict probable future behaviour. We infer the rule, *langue*, of *ēthos* from the *parole* of acts, *praxeis. Ēthos* is a function of time and the perspective on acts in time, a kind of biographical synopsis drawn from acts drawn together into a set, *sumperilabomena*[83].

[82] Foley, 1980: 132.

[83] See § 5.2.4 n. 31and § 5.5.3 p. 336.

Character and meaning and value, in the *polis* as in the theatre, these are never anything other than inferred or passed on (conferred and received) in some way. Like *drōmena*, *orgia* – ritual acts – *praxeis*, *dramata* – biographical, theatrical, historical acts – are expressive of an agency. They manifest motivation and intention but are not identical with those. A person is somehow more than the sum of its acts. It is a vague, unseeable value, something like the relation – binding thread – between acts, composite of such intangible properties as desires, aversions, knowledge and ignorance.

People are opaque because they conceal person and person is invisible but all-important, the necessary and sufficient condition for social agency. Person and identity, being immaterial, are only ever apprehended or conveyed through the traces of their presence or absence. They are the invisible "contents" that become momentarily manifest. This most captivating Dionysus is ultimately uncapturable an ungraspable by humans. It is not that Euripides mystifies Dionysus as a terminally elusive phenomenon. His representation has served to *show* him, to celebrate and *publicize* him and complicate his identity and our possible relations to him. It has shown him as familiar and estranged, both mysterious and partaking of the everyday order in which human life unfolds. The Tragic drama does not simply vaunt human skill – as fateful Actaeon, Pentheus, Agauē did theirs – but fosters a sense of the always relative value of knowledge and skill. The drama itself has been the most impressive act, a human envisioning of human and divine agency. Foley credited it with an agency almost as if independent of its human creators:

> Dionysus' divinity in the *Bacchae* can be understood through this power to control representation. Euripides makes his anomalous "untragic" mask become the central mocking image of what we as men can understand of a force that cannot be fully captured by human vision.[84]

By this reading Dionysus becomes a kind of producer-artist-deity, who will only too naturally invite a Charles Segal two years later to devise an interpretation of theatre as meta-theatre and *Bacchae* as an unpacking of the operations of symbol and illusion[85]. "Dionysus", from the anthropological perspective being taken here, controls nothing. He is expressly *made* to do whatever he seems to do. His purposes, dangerous as the utterance of this knowledge may be, are what Taylor called "derived purposes", they originate in human

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[84] Foley, 1980: 133.

[85] Segal, 1997 [1982]. Cf. also Foley, 1985: 219, "The language and action of the play allow Dionysus, until the return of the second messenger, to make the play and the manifestation of the divinity an indivisible process. His role as stage director/ actor corresponds with his role in the plot – to demonstrate and then to avenge his divinity . . . Dionysus makes his chorus his players and the destruction of Pentheus a 'play', replete with set, costume, and spectators."

minds. The point is not simply that Dionysus is a god because he possesses a plastic mastery over form unavailable to humans and that mortals must not confuse themselves with divinity. It is rather that *Bacchae* is one re-interpretation of Dionysus and his myth, in which the complexity of the human's nearly animal involuntariness and nearly divine forms of agency are glimpsed.

This re-interpretation is not simply a remoulding of something "there", but a *re-instituting* of Dionysus, his *katastasis* "establishment". It does the very work that Dionysus in the play says he has come to Thebes and travelled to the cities of the world to do: to *instititute Dionysus*[86]. And that is what it really means to apprehend a person, to identify the character from its acts, which we witness in its presence: to establish it. We construe identity, we read persons and protagonists biographically, discerning a thread in time that is not there in a simple manner, but that we first draw and bind. In this re-interpretation by the poet Euripides (already himself absent, the historical premier of the play having been posthumous), whose play was performed together with two other plays that afternoon 2421 years ago, what is at stake is identity and the detection of persons and qualities of person.

The capacity for metamorphosis is common with the gods. In his entanglements with the human species, Zeus is always becoming embodied in the shape of all manner of creatures. Having become manifest to human perceiving as ungraspable, uncanny and awful as lightning[87], in his more "authentic" divine form, Zeus destroyed the mortal Semelē. Athena, another offspring like Dionysus of strange artificial parturition, is a great impostor.[88]

Other gods and *daimonioi* too are represented through masks; it is not unique with Dionysus[89]. In his sophisticated handling of the mask in *Bacchae*, which in its shifting character and dynamic relation to both the audience and to the identity of the speaking person of the mask, seems to materialize an immaterial quality, that function of presence and perspective, Euripides has explored and articulated more richly, Dionysus as *der Maskengott*[90]. This is because he has interpreted so brilliantly and made so manifest the social

[86] 20-2: ἐς τήνδε πρώτην ἦλθον Ἑλλήνων πόλιν,/ τἀκεῖ χορεύσας καὶ καταστήσας ἐμὰς/ τελετάς, ἵν' εἴην ἐμφανὴς δαίμων βροτοῖς.

[87] In Ovid, the form commensurate only with his divine wife Hera; when they are both undisguised at home she becomes naked to receive him amorously. See [Apollod.] 3.4.3; Ov. *Met.* 3. 273-291, see § 2.2.1.2 n. 127.

[88] There are wonderful scenes in *Odyssey* 13, for example, of Athena interacting with her favourite mortal, Odysseus, himself a human master of concealment and dissimulation. There the mortal tries to bluff the goddess incognita in a scene of lightly comic mutual mendacity. Hera disguised herself as an old crone, Beroë, to persuade Semelē to ask of Zeus the gift that would mean her own death: congress with a god unadapted to the human scale and nature, see § 2.2.1.2 p. 73 n. 127.

[89] Artemis, Gorgo, see Vernant, 1985.

[90] Otto, 1933 [2011]: 80-4.

meaning of his dramatic art, the currency of which is intercourse – *homilia* – exchange itself, and its conduit, the face.

"How did this get to be here?" is a question that scholars ask of Dionysus in Greek religious and cultural life. That is another way to ask what the god has to do with theatre[91]. An interpreter like Rohde read Dionysus' presence as an incursion into the Hellenic scene tracing historical events, the spread of an Asiatic cult westwards through Thrace[92]. Since the 1950s we have known for certain what Nietzsche, Rohde's friend, had intuited: Dionysus is Greek and was worshipped or known in Crete and Mycenae since at least the mid-2nd Millennium BCE, not an "non-hellenic" aberration[93]. "How did he get here?" keeps being asked in Dionysiac myth: what is he, what is he not? He is a god whose origins in the world of persons is always a topic. In *Bacchae*, as we have seen, much space is given to explaining Dionysus' divine and earthly origins and his movement through the historical, human world. We are told in detail how Dionysus came about and how he goes about. And still, in the "person" Dionysus we discover just that indeterminacy which Gell traced between performances and artefacts:

> . . . there is a seamless continuity between modes of artistic action which involve 'performance' and those which are mediated via artefacts. The distinction has no theoretical significance. *Every artefact is a 'performance' in that it motivates the abduction of its coming-to-being in the world*. Any object that one encounters in the world invites the question 'how did this thing get to be here?' Mostly, the answers to such questions are so taken for granted as not to play any part in one's conscious mental life (but somewhere in one's psyche, there must be *a device which identifies the familiar as familiar*).[94]

We have been taking Dionysus' point of view in *Bacchae*. We have taken several perspectives – the performance has been an artefact, an index composed of person-indexes: embodied, theatrical characters. We have taken the point of view of these persons and this question that Gell speaks of about the familiar, has been posed with force. The everyday has become estranged. Person, which is so familiar that we ordinarily take it for granted, has become something about which we ask: 'how did this thing get to be here?' Euripides has illuminated a device by which we identify the familiar and come to recognize also the

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[91] On the famous proverb *ouden pros ton Dionyson*, "nothing to do with Dionysus", see Winkler and Zeitlin, in Winkler & Zeitlin, 1990: 3-11.

[92] Rohde, 1892-4.

[93] See Burkert in Schlesier: 15-22. Bernabé in Bernabé: 23-37.

[94] Gell, 1998: 67-8.

unfamiliar. Asking how Dionysus came to get here, when it is done in the right way, not as if we already knew the answer, means asking productively about the nature of agency, of our agency and our identity as persons. It is a manner of framing, through the contact between mortal and divine persons, of fundamental questions about human identity and values.

The poet has unfolded or explicated some essential features of personhood and agency. He has shown that in certain lights, these impalpable qualities, so central in human life and meaning, can require special modes of inference, extraordinary strategies of knowing, which are adapted to the special "object of knowledge", which is subjectivity. There are different ways of *knowing* things and different ways of being related to them – not least is adopting a certain affective posture or bearing towards life and others, one determined by a sensitivity to the essentially mortal, temporal identity of human existence. In *Bacchae* the mask is an index of complex or implicated personhood. In the play it is the creation of the wearer, Dionysus, *skeuopoios*[95]. He is a generator of forms – human (at Thebes, at Thrace in Aeschylus), animal (bull, snake, lion), always containing within his diverse, adopted forms the same divine personal identity: Dionysus. Through it, by a kind of magic of art and perspective, we are as if constrained to abduct the presence of a complex person, by which to account for this reflexive and ambiguous artefact. Euripides has created the illusion of a complex, original agent by investing Dionysus and this smiling mask with the changefulness of something in time. He has animated the person of Dionysus, turning the *characton* – mark – of a smile, into a laughing character.

6.4 *Facialité*: The Mask as Social Performance

Social interactions have an aesthetic dimension, and aesthetic experiences, a social. The attractive Dionysus enchants those in his co-presence, he is finally irresistible. Humans must have the due social relations with him. He fascinates and he wants the recognition, in situations of appropriate tact, from the mortals in his proximity. Dionysus is the fascinating god, the captivating[96]. His enchantment is exercised – as human social actors exert their influence and charm upon one another – through his voice, *ops*, and his face, *ōps*. With the concept of "fascination", we discern the unity of the aesthetic and the social, which is essential to understanding Dionysus and his depiction in *Bacchae*.[97]

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[95] See Arist. *Poet.* 1450b. 17-20, epigraph to § 6.3.1 above.

[96] ". . . captivation, the primordial kind of human agency.", Gell, 1998: 69; also Gell, 1988 and 1992.

[97] As Gell read art objects as social persons, so may we seek to delineate the social situation of Tragedy as an "art situation", and social actors as similarly "distributing agency". See Gell, 1998 on performances and distribution: 96-154, 221-3.

Of all the many fascinating points raised in Vernant's several essays on the theme of the mask, and Dionysus' laughing face, the one that bears emphasizing here is found in the paper by Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux: "Figures du masque en Grèce ancienne", 1986. Dionysus is not simply a god who shows his face amongst mortals (periodically in the life of the city, sensationally and unpredictably in myth and drama): still more he is a god of very *facialité*.

> Le texte tragique ainsi que les représentations figurées mettent en évidence une des caractéristiques fondamentales de cette puissance divine: la facialité. Comme Gorgô, Dionysos est un dieu avec qui l'homme ne peut entrer en contact que dans un face-à-face: impossible de le regarder sans tomber du même coup sous la fascination de son regard, qui vous arrache à vous même.[98]

Thus does the Stranger, a god feigning – *eirōn* "dissembler", "ironic" – to be a devotee, tell Pentheus, that he has seen the god "face-to-face", ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα 470, literally "seen him seeing (me)". Attention is drawn to the face and the mask in *Bacchae*[99]. This is a play in which the poet deploys an apparently unique and highly original "non-tragic" mask in a Tragedy, one bearing the expression of laughter that belongs properly only in Comedy[100]. In diverse ways, to those onstage and to those in the audience, the mask is an exceptional artefact, something with that quality of the unfamiliar which gives pause.

It is especially from the evidence of the plastic arts, however, that Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux draw their evidence for the suggested *facialité* of Dionysus. On the so-called François Vase this, they argue, is dramatically figured[101]. The gods move in procession and all are depicted in profile; Dionysus alone "turns" and faces the viewer full-frontal[102]. The spectator is thus supposedly placed in the position of the initiand, according to Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux. Even presented in profile on drinking cups, the god holds the mortal's gaze, whoever is in his presence they wrote, "regarde encore dans les yeux celui qui le regarde.", clearly invoking *Bacchae*, 470: ὁρῶν ὁρῶντα[103].

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[98] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 39.

[99] *Genus*: οἰνωπὸν γένυν, 438, 456, 698, 1186; *Stoma*: 70, 387, 725; *Prosōpon*: 1021, 1277; *Gelān*: 380, 439; προσώπωι γελῶντι, 1021.

[100] See Seidensticker, 1978, 1982; and Taplin, 1986. Most interesting and suggestive in this regard are the remarks that close that symposium supposed to have taken place in the same year as *Bacchae*, where Socrates tries to persuade his drowsing companions that the same skills are required by the comic and the tragic poets: Pl. *Sym.* 223-c-d.

[101] See *LIMC* III "Dionysus", pl. 496.

[102] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 39.

[103] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 39.

Beyond only the exceptional posture of the François Vase, it is still more in the representations of Dionysus as mask-idol that we will discern the inescapable power of fascination that belongs to the god, they argue[104]. All gods have faces, one may caution. Of course, that is how and why we regard them as persons. With Dionysus this feature is most prominent – and hence, Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux can speak of the god's peculiar *facialité* – because the problem and nature of persons and their agency becomes most conspicuous with Dionysus and that most paradigmatically in Euripides' *Bacchae*.

This is an imaginative interpretation of these painted scenes. There are some problems. An inspection of the vases of similar scenes[105] does not ambiguously provide us with a picture of a god to whom peculiarly belongs a power to fascinate , "du même coup", or a unique *faciailité*, as they are proposing. "Sous le regard du dieu," they explained, "vers qui leurs regards convergent, trainant à leur suite les yeux du spectateur, elles distribuent le breuvage dangereux, maléfique si on l'absorbe sans les précautions rituelles."[106] And yet if our eyes converge on the mask of the god fixed on the pillar, it is not by reason of a mystifying power to entrance. His figure stands in the very mid-point, the bodies of the women form a symmetrical frame making him the centre of the scene to which the human eye, by reflex, is drawn. The painter draws the viewer's eye to the mask by use of lines and compositional *nous*. It is not in fact clear that the lines of sight of the painted figures "converge" on the mask. It could just as well be said that they seem focused on the ritual task with which they are occupied, carefully ladling the wine from the large *kratēr* (like the *stamnos* on which the scene is itself painted) into the cups they are holding.

If we compare this with a very similar scene on another famous red-figure vase in the Museo Archeologico in Naples[107], we see again a similar composition of bodies centralizing Dionysus. Here there is a more dynamic quality as there is not only careful pouring in front of the god's idol (of the god in his liquid form), but also revelling bacchants, one carrying a tambourine aloft and others *thyrsoi*, fennel wands, their heads thrown back and their arms describing the dancer's motion. None of the human sight lines here converge on a single point. This only enhances the sense of movement around a motionless central person, calm

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[104] "Mais ce sont surtout les représentations de son idole masquée qui expriment le mieux la fascination de ses yeux inéluctables.", Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 39.

[105] See *LIMC* III "Dionysus", pl. 25-80 and the vase they offer as a sketched illustration in their essay, a 5th C. BCE red-figure stamnos by the Villa Giulia Painter, one of the "Lenaia Vases", Boston 90.155, *ARV*^{2} 621.34. On Dionysus in ancient art, see especially Carpenter, 1987, 1996; Isler-Kerényi, 2007; Moraw in Schlesier: 233-52 and Plates XXXVII-LXV; Carpenter in Schlesier, 2011 on Dionysus in red-figured Apulian vases, 253-61. See also March, 1989 on *Bacchae* in the light of vase-painting; and Peirce, 1998 "Visual Language and Concepts of Cult on the 'Lenaia Vases'".

[106] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 39-40.

[107] *LIMC* III "Dionysus", pl. 33.

and self-possessed, as Dionysus describes himself in the second episode: *parōn hēsuchos thassōn*[108].

Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux think that a different aspect of Dionysiac ritual is expressed in the images of the double or single mask in profile, danced around by maenads[109]. Here the devotees are seeking to evoke, fix and encircle the god in the *milieu* of their worshipping bodies. They are striving to make the god present at a specific point ("circonscrire en un point du sol") in a natural setting, in the way that gods usually are "placed" indoors in temples. This presence is radically elusive, the spectre of a strangeness never to be familiarized or domesticated, yet anywhere: "cette présence divine dont le masque creux aux yeux vacants souligne l'insaissisable ubiquité, l'irrémédiable altérité."[110] This is very much a mainstream late 20th Century reading of Dionysus[111], Dionysiac imagery and ritual, and its colouring remains Nietzschean. An alternative interpretation is available[112].

In many images, such as in the so-called "Lenaia Vases", offerings are made to Dionysus-idols, the mask affixed to a shaft and given a robe as torso; around him male and female and satyric figures play musical instruments, dance, bow, lay gifts. The most striking effect in these situations is of the *sociability* conveyed. If Dionysus can fascinate it is because he is engaged by humans and engages them back *auf Augenhöhe*. He sees the one seeing him: *horōn horōnta.* The striking element in these scenes, is the peculiar reciprocity with this divine person, not the one-sided domination by a bewitching god, but a charisma in encounters of a certain kind of mutuality. Dionysus seems to look back at the viewer; that is all it takes for a viewer to feel personally engaged. If there is fascination here it is of the same

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[108] 621-2: πλησίον δ' ἐγὼ παρὼν/ ἥσυχος θάσσων ἔλευσσον. "I was present nearby, peacefully seated I idly looked on".

[109] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 40.

[110] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 40. On otherness and Dionysus, see Schlesier [ed.], 2011 *A Different God*, and here esp. Gödde, 85-104 and Henrichs: 105-116, also Henrichs in *Masks*: 13-43, an insightful discussion of the transition in the 20th Century view of Dionysus as a god defined through polarity to one defined, after Gernet, through his otherness or alterity. Henrichs in *Masks*: 33-4 compares Otto's polarity approach and the French alterity approach as follows: "Otto's Dionysus is composed of opposite characteristics; the two side of each pair are treated as equivalent. By contrast alterity is a more discriminating category; it establishes a hierarchical relationship between opposites by treating one as normal and the other as abnormal. Vernant and Detienne tend to overemphasize the negative side of the polarity because it reflects their notion of the Other as a subversive and disruptive force (cf. Bierl 1991, 14-16, esp. nn. 34, 37, and 40). The two models, though deceptively similar, are difficult to reconcile.", see also Vernant 1985a, 11-13, 25-30.

[111] A god of "altérité", the dark, irrational alternative of luminous Apollo, a symbol for all the formerly oppressed and suppressed emotional and libidinal life, now liberated, positively valorized and healthily re-admitted, since Nietzsche, Freud, sexual emancipation, enfranchisement and the end of colonialism and its artificial distinctions. On the Apollo-Dionysus antithesis, see § 3.1 nn. 12, 13 and see Wood, 2011 and Suárez de la Torre in Bernabé: 58-81.

[112] A red-figure amphora in the Louvre, for example, depicts a Dionysus idol in profile on the periphery of the composition, while a kneeling, ithyphallic satyr bends over a large *kratēr* in the centre. The satyr, here, looks directly out at the viewer. The *facialité* here does not belong to Dionysus, unless we say that it is distributed through the servant of Dionysiac purpose, the satyr. *LIMC* III "Dionysus", pl. 37.

quality (even if escalated) as the very everyday fascination that other persons hold – to greater and lesser degrees – for human beings. His mystical power derives from his purchase on human person as himself a charismatic person. Dionysus is placed at face-height, he stands amongst persons as a person, propped up for some mode of social intercourse. The prominence of Dionysus' face is itself only an expression of the primary fact of Dionysiac sociality, *homilia*.

The effects and meaning of cult practice is seen as identical to, or at least cognate with, those of the theatre by these influential Parisian scholars. The readings of *Bacchae* allegedly support the readings of the imagery and of what they show about cult and vice versa:

> Ces accesoires vides, le masque barbu, la couronne de lierre, la robe flottante figurant la divinité avec qui, en un face-à-face fasciné, le fidèle peut se fondre, l'homme peut lui-même les revêtir, endossant ainsi les marques du dieu, les prenant sur soi pour s'en mieux laisser posséder. *Devenir autre, en basculant dans le regard du dieu ou en s'assimilant à lui par contagion mimétique, tel est le but du dionysisme qui met l'homme en contact immédiat avec l'altérité du divin*[113]. C'est un phénomène parallèle qui s'accomplit au théatre . . .[114]

Their argument is forceful and seductive, not least for a certain lyrical élan[115]. Nevertheless, Dionysus in *Bacchae* has not come seeking the dissolution of identities or the melting down of the believing person into any kind of bacchic amalgam. Dionysus has come to Thebes to reclaim a social identity and a social relation. He never ever seeks to promulgate anything so doctrinal or congealed as a *dionysisme*. As the Homeric gods occasionally did, Dionysus moves amongst mortals, in the historical world, the horizontal plain of face-to-face encounters. Yet Dionysus stops for a while. He dances with humans, *as* a human[116]; he does not only devise a strategy and then come amongst mortals to accomplish or defend that, but his presence and company have some inherent purpose in itself. His presence is itself his *telos*. He does not show himself and then get on with some ulterior goal – showing himself *is* his goal, being there and marking time with his mood and ambience, an emotional enhancement of experience. He stands across from humans, in their midst: he is co-present

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[113] On the notion of the "Dionysian", a Nietzschean legacy, see also Henrichs in *Masks*: 24-6.

[114] Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 40-1.

[115] "Otto was a spiritual disciple of Nietzsche, who inspired Otto's dithyrambic style and emphasis on Dionysian emotionalism.", Henrichs in *Masks*: 29. For Otto's influence on the Paris school, see 31-3. On Otto and his influence, see Bremmer in Bernabé: 4-22 and the essay by Alessandro Stavru in the 2011 edition of Otto's *Dionysos* 1933.

[116] Or is it that humans, when they dance, become somewhat like gods for a time, transcending historical time, being in the time of the music? Most likely humans become momentarily divine, *and* the god becomes an historical being amongst them. In Dionysus the two modes come face-to-face.

with mortals. In Dionysus' co-presence we see, in sharp relief, what mortal, ephemeral, over-inflated things, humans are, what creatures of low cunning, forgetting themselves too easily and judging poorly. In *Bacchae* they are also potentially capable of a grace and beauty and a joyous community if they enter into their common forms of life in the right spirit.

Dionysus has not wanted assimilation of humans, through his rites and moods, by involuntary means. *Mania* has been a punishment, a contagion. He has not automatically bewitched those who have looked into his face, only that man, Pentheus, who has looked and seen but not realized that and how he is looked back upon; the man who has seen in others only his own understanding of motivation. The madness of the Theban maenads in *Bacchae* is infected out of revenge, as is the *lussa* cast on Pentheus[117]. Dionysiac community is healthy assimilation, whereas frenzied dissolution is a sure symptom of disease and cause of the most abject suffering. Euripides' Dionysus in *Bacchae* does not arrive to displace human persons but, since their lives cannot be *lengthened*, extended in time, to as if *deepen* them by offering alternative modes of sociality and a restructured will and self. He does not want to negate individuals or subjectivity, but transiently unite them into a common person. He does so and achieves, temporarily, the most difficult and urgent challenge that faces all human communities everywhere: the binding together of diverse minds and purposes, a brief relaxation of social tension and conjoining of many into one. That necessary element of public "alertness" is released in the common, public domain for a while, through Dionysus. This is an integrative, wholesome act, that reveals the Dionysiac motive.

By the end of *Bacchae*, yes, we have seen again how different gods are from mortals, but we are also impressed by how very similar and intelligible, even if also unkown, they can be. This god is too much like mortals in his passionate anger, his *orgē*[118]. Gods talk, (like foreigners, women, children and slaves, they even speak Greek); they are thoroughly intelligible, tactful performers. They are motivated, they scheme and plot and are moved by the same social emotions that mark so much of human life: shame, face, competitiveness. Reading *Bacchae* as a lesson in alterity or on a cryptic telestic pattern will induce us to read pictorial representations of the god in a like fashion, to deduce from this prior idea about Dionysus how the various modalities of his representation hang together[119]. The attempt being made here is to interpret Dionysus in a manner commensurate with the modes of evaluation and interpretation *Bacchae*, *qua* theatrical drama, itself seems to summon forth.

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[117] For *lussa* personified in a Dionysiac context, *Lussa*, see Aesch. fr. 169 from *Xantriai*.

[118] 1348.

[119] On the strangeness and alterity that is a definitive feature of Dionysus, who is nevertheless Greek, a good recent discussion is Gödde's "'Fremde Nähe': Zur mythologischen Differenz des Dionysos" in Schlesier [ed.], 2011: 85-104. On this theme there is much in Schlesier's work, *A Different God: Dionysos and Polytheism*, of very great value to the interpreter of Dionysus. See also Bernabé: *Redefining Dionysos*.

The play is not simply a vehicle for conveying us to the holy mountain of Dionysiac knowledge. It is about the map of "hidden paths" by which mortals arrive, with no prosthetic, at that knowledge. The knowledge is a knowledge concerning the manner of knowing, a manner of going. There is *a priori* no reason why we should interpret *Bacchae* in an Euripidean or Dionysiac manner. It is, however, worth the attempt to help define further how the play works and what it may *intend*.

6.5 The Captivation of Others

Scholars have wanted to see in Dionysus in Euripides' *Bacchae* an eruption into the "everyday *durée* of interactions" a force of estrangement that healthily upsets routine and revitalizes a culture, and surely this element is there in the phenomenon of Dionysus[120]. Yet Dionysus does not only erupt. He comes regularly and punctually in sympotic gatherings; annually in the Megala Dionysia, the Lenaia, the Anthesteria; triterically in maenadic *oreisbasia*[121]. His advent is awaited. Dionysus' worshippers celebrate the "everyday" as an inherent value: *to de kat' hēmar biotos*[122]. The Dionysus of Euripides emphatically does not stand in opposition to the ordinary. His very otherness validates the quotidian and binds together social actors in a single action, in the experience of joint-attention, which for a time turns the intersubjective community of agents into an integrated, consubjective whole[123].

The most ordinary constituent of the human social world – a social relationship and the value and identity that relationship incurs and entails – is what interests him above all. His festival too is an extraordinary, "ultrasocial" occasion, a moment of renewed and deepened solidarity, a special kind of encounter of the polity with itself: *seeing itself seeing*. Through the episodes from the life of Dionysus, such as in *Bacchae*, what is brought into sharp relief is that the gods are radically different, and yet not so terminally other as to be utterly unintelligible or unrecognizable. Their presence is a fearsome thing, but potentially, we learn through Dionysus, as sweet and desirable as the most joyful human companionship.

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[120] "Ce que réalise Dionysos, et ce que provoque aussi le masque, quand l'acteur le revêt, c'est, à travers ce qui est rendu présent, l'irruption, au centre de la vie publique, d'une dimension d'existence totalement étrangère à l'univers du quotidien.", Vernant and Frontisi-Ducroux in Vernant & Vidal-Naquet, 1986: 41-2.

[121] Dodds 132-4: ἐς δὲ χορεύματα / συνῆψαν τριετηρίδων, / αἷς χαίρει Διόνυσος.

[122] 910-11: τὸ δὲ κατ' ἦμαρ ὅτωι βίοτος / εὐδαίμων, μακαρίζω. Cf. also κατὰ φάος νύκτας τε φίλας / εὐαίωνα διαζῆν, 425-6. Note also that this validation of everyday life is, perhaps, possible because Dionysus has brought the only cure for its ills: he transforms routine into rhythm, 282-3: ὕπνον τε λήθην τῶν καθ' ἡμέραν κακῶν/ δίδωσιν, οὐδ' ἔστ' ἄλλο φάρμακον πόνων. 381-3: ἀποπαῦσαί τε μερίμνας, / ὁπόταν βότρυος ἔλθηι / γάνος ἐν δαιτὶ θεῶν. 421-3: ἴσαν δ' ἔς τε τὸν ὄλβιον / τόν τε χείρονα δῶκ' ἔχειν / οἴνου τέρψιν ἄλυπον.

[123] On the "Joint Attention Hypothesis" see Tomasello's important *The Cultural Origins of Human Cognition* (2000) and Metcalfe & Terrace [edd.], 2013 *Agency and Joint Attention*.

We learn just how much there exists a sociality, not only that marks both the human and divine world, but an *homilia shared between* human community and a god.

In his drama as in the rituals depicted on Greek vases, Dionysus is a figure given all the attributes necessary for interaction: the eccentric upright posture of a human, the face at a level with the human face that forms an horizon of reflexivity, the eyes and mouth[124]. In Dionysus, in representations and in idols generally, it holds as it does for human beings: "the face is not simply the proximate physical origin of speech but the dominant area of the body across which intricacies of experience, feeling and intention are written."[125]. It is sufficient to have a mouth and eyes and to "stand" in order to potentially see back when seen. Dionysus habitually takes or is given this life-sized human form, on the plain of human interaction. It is not on the basis of his difference or of divine power that he becomes recognized. Euripides is "spiritualizing" divine identity, as he dematerializes all identity. The complex implications of the poet's vision of the encounter of man and god lead to a profound and defamiliarizing re-assessment of the most fundamental categories and concepts: personhood, agency, mind, knowledge, identity.

Even the opaqueness of Dionysus is the opacity of a person: does he not move because he does not wish to move; is his *hēsuchia*, instead of being a sign that he is an inert object, ironic evidence that he is indeed a sovereign and imperturbable god? He smiles, he has intentions and, potentially, he may respond – are they good for us or bad? These need not be expressed as theory or doctrine: ritual and theatre make them facts that seem *there*, in the moment. Their persuasive power inheres in constituting the god as phenomena that are immediately experienced just as social others ordinarily are experienced. With Dionysus all the minimal conditions are in place to satisfy the potential that he is a person. He meets the requirements for the full conditions of co-presence which, as we have seen, are "found whenever agents 'sense that they are close enough to be perceived in whatever they are doing, including their experiencing of others, and close enough to be perceived in this sense of being perceived."[126]

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[124] This is not to say that Dionysus is only ever upright. He is figured seated for example in *LIMC* 135-47, 325-46, 363 ff. He is figured variously reclined on couches, enthroned, seated on leopards, bulls, donkeys. He is at human level, nearly invariably in situations of social contact, so very socially versatile that he is engaged also by animals and hybrids like satyrs. The impression is not of a god who is bestial or reduced but of a person who brings all, even non-human creatures, into forms of social community. The point is assembly, gathering, forms of communing that all take place in the proximity of the god of sociality in its diverse forms. That the primary contents of Dionysus' identity are his persona, the face, is strongly suggested by the easily dispensed-with body. It is not having a body that is essential here but only having the eccentric posture of an anthropoid. See *LIMC* 161-2, 170-2 for examples of rectangular pillars showing little concern to figure anything like a realistic body, even one concealed by clothing.

[125] Giddens, 1984: 67.

[126] Giddens, 1984: 67.

Alfred Gell discussed the ideas of fascination, captivation and enchantment through several of his inspired works on the anthropology of art and agency. Art objects and performances, he suggested, are not simply rhetorical but bewitching and, in inducing a kind of aporia through their indecipherability (their being hard to *characterize*), they can "trap" the viewer or audience. Here dazzlement, incomprehension and forms of social entanglement are very close: we have gone beyond signs and their power to convey and distort judgements. Indexes are like those gifts, *doloi,* by which an agent – a cognitive subject – is trammeled by the intentions of the originator of the index, experienced as a presence inhabiting the index:

> Captivation or fascination – the demoralization by the spectacle of unimaginable virtuosity – ensues from the spectator becoming entrapped within the index because the index embodies agency which is essentially indecipherable.[127]

Generations of scholars have benefitted from the "demoralizing" power of *Bacchae*. The indecipherability of Dionysus has haunted minds and not let them go. It is an unfinished business; its meaning (its intentions, its mind) is not easily located, its being possessed of *presence* hard for the scientist explainer and the humanist interpreter to account for. It is a performance that has *entangled* the audience, or the reader. Perhaps it is this power of entanglement and this easily entangled character of the naturally sociable, so readily engaged mind, that is one of its secrets. We are apparently very *eutrepes*, amenable, to feeling in the proximity of persons. We find that persons fascinate us.

The admirer of Dionysus as mysterious life-force may be disappointed with this too reasonable interpretation of *Bacchae* and its god. To address a phenomenon with the mind and through the mind's strategies is not to claim to have exhausted the possibilities in that phenomenon. There is not much point of speaking of that about which one cannot speak. On this note we conclude this discussion of Dionysus' face and its meanings.

6.7 Summary

From the time of Nietzsche to the middle of the 20th Century, Dionysus was a god defined through polarity, an antithetical counterpart – *antipalos* – to Apollo. In the symbolist, time-freed, ahistorical interpreting of Otto, Dionysus was defined through certain attributes, values defined by their opposite (darkness, moisture, indefiniteness, wildness, vitality, etc.). After Gernet, it is not above all through polarity but alterity, an otherness which can be the

[127] Gell, 1998: 71.

opposite of anything standing before it, that Dionysus has been interpreted. This otherness found its image for scholars in the mask of Dionysus, behind which was the infinitely plastic substance which is no substance: empty space.

The story of the modern trend of understanding Dionysus is a story of a transition from a poetics of presence to one of absence, from the substance of structure to the hollowness of post-structuralism. Yet Dionysus is a god who calls most suitably neither for the structural analysis of binary difference, which he mocks, nor for any kind of constructivism. He summons just that dynamism, the sense of fundamental temporality and movement so well served by Giddens' theory of structuration, a dynamized structuralism or historiography with agency. In Giddens, the primacy of the body and face, in the context of encounters and talk, which is the always local, historical context of human beings, provides a salutary antidote to interpretive strategies like that of the symbolists and morphologists (structuralists, any hermeneutics of pattern-recognition)[128]. Everything the symbolic interpreter touches turns into something timeless. This is not always apposite with the most extemporaneous, the most *ad hoc* of gods: Dionysus keeps materializing, coming into being in history not only vanishing into the timelessness of structure, *mythe*, *langue*, *logos*, doctrine, transcendence or law[129].

To speak and to laugh is to "put out there"; it is to constitute a public space. Wherever two or more are gathered there is already an *agora* and a *boulē*. The face of others is the horizon to which social persons are always oriented. Divining the lay of things beyond that horizon is the ongoing activity of persons in co-presence. Every act of communication is an interpretation, an intention conveyed and received to greater or lesser degrees of candour and truth-value. Voice and face are radically subject to time, they constantly shift, are constantly sealing and unsealing the substance (more like an electric current than a 'substance'), which constitutes the living network of human social life: meaning. How to catch the meaning of words and looks is intricately caught up with the problem of holding them, retaining them in time, in order to know their identity and pass on or transmit it, as one holds up and passes on a mask or a portrait. Dionysus in *Bacchae* modifies and differentiates the notion of what is true and valuable. It is not simply that which can be held,

[128] On structuration see Giddens, 1984: 16-25.

[129] Cf. Burkert on the representation of Dionysus in the "Lenaia Vases": "Sie zeigen Frauen Wein schöpfend, trinkend, tanzend vor einem ad hoc hergestellten Dionysosidol: eine bärtige Maske - oder auch zwei gegenständige Masken - an einer Säule aufgehängt; ein Tuch zur Andeutung des Körpers, um die Säule geschlungen, gelegentlich von einer Querstange gehalten wie bei einer Vogelscheuche; Arme und Beine sind nicht einmal angedeutet . . . Das Idol im Zentrum ist ohne Zweifel Dionysos; offenbar ist dieser Gott nicht dauerhaft in einer Statue präsent, er wird für das Fest, ja in seinem Verlauf erst 'gemacht'." Burkert, 2011 (1977): 362. See also Burkert, 2011 (1977): 256 "Der Gott selbst ist vielgestaltig. Er kann in der schlichtesten Form vergegenwärtigt werden…", and my forthcoming "*Dionysos Autoschediastikos*: the *ad hoc hergestellte* God". On the "Lenaia Vases", visual language and cult practice, see Peirce, 1998.

but a certain bearing towards the passing of things. Correspondingly, forms and meaning that change are not as a result meanings that are false, but only differently oriented toward time's current.

Personhood like the face and the voice, is defined by its being in time. it is subject to and constitutes an environment of perpetual shifting. The human visage may be seen as a moveable, articulable mask, I argued here. The dynamism of the face makes it different to the mask in the same way that speech is different to writing. It is much more plastic, much more changeable and subject to emotions and intentions (which are largely indeterminate and always coming into being) than the fabricated, stamped faces, which are masks, *prosōpa*. Indeed, the peculiar nature of character is betrayed in the original sense of *charassein*: "stamp", "notch", "engrave". There are two senses of 'character': as cipher or identifying mark and (therefore also) of the identity inferred. Character is an inference drawn from acts. Habitually Pentheus acts in such a manner. His kin characterize him as doing so, different actors imply that they know him as acting in such a way, we see him acting in such a way. From the experience of Pentheus and the experience of accounts of Pentheus made by others, we put together a "Pentheus" in our minds as having such and such a form. Yet human acts are never done until death. We cannot say that a man was blessed until he was and is no more. So do the vicissitudes in the fortunes of a Kadmos exemplarily teach, and such is a very strong theme in the contemporary of Euripides, Herodotus, and throughout Greek Tragedy[130]. But no drama explores more brilliantly than *Bacchae* the recursive nature of things, their manner of *morphing* into their opposite in a rhythmic pattern that seems to make time, experienced as partial and fragmentary, as if a force of consummation: *telein*.

The face is more *in time* than the mask. The face is animate, the mask becomes animated. The mask is fungible but not changeable. The human face is changeable and *plastos,* mouldable, but not fungible: it cannot be exchanged only changed or covered, painted, enhanced[131]. Fungibility of aspect, metamorphosis, is a divine capacity. Humans can only cover up, counterfeit, dissemble and seek to control their expressions and how they are taken. Often they let on or give themselves away, reveal their intentions in spite of themselves. Mortals are far more complex than gods. This is not because gods are fictions and humans not, but because humans are more dynamic fictions, radically subject to the constant shifting of perspective in time. Human *ēthos* is unfixed, hence did philosophers like Socrates and Aristotle put so much effort into reflecting upon what a good life would be: what one is is what one has become and is always becoming through acting in certain ways and valuing

[130] Hdt. 1.32 Solon and Croesus; and the story of the Samian king, Polykrates at Hdt. 3.39-44.

[131] See 457-9.

certain values, such that certain desires become one's effective desires[132]. *Ēthos* does not have *object permanence*, in the way that a temple or piece of wood seems to do. It is like little Ernst's mother described by Freud, *fort und da, da und fort*[133].

[132] Cf. § 3.2.2.

[133] Freud, 1920, *Jenseits des Lustprinzips*: 11-15. On object permanence, constancy see § 6.3.2 n. 40 and Larson, 2016: 111.

7

Conclusion

Silhouette of an Anthropology of Tragic Subjects

ἃ μὲν συνῆκα, γενναῖα· οἶμαι δὲ καὶ ἃ μὴ συνῆκα·[1]

7.1 *En merei/ en telei*: A *Meristic* Reading

At 860 there is a phrase that has been diversely interpreted and translated. One recent editor has emended the text in a way that gives us an opportunity to draw this long discussion to a close. Dionysus has begun his bewitchment of Pentheus, whose resistance is crumbling. The man has left the scene in a strange condition halfway between having his own will and having lost it to the Stranger. He is caught in a state, which is neither knowledge of self nor entirely ignorance of self, 859-61[2]:

γνώσεται δὲ τὸν Διὸς
Διόνυσον, ὡς πέφυκεν ἐν μέρει θεὸς
δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος.

He will recognize the son of Zeus
Dionysus, as a god by turns utterly
Terrible or most gentle to mortals.

I retain Diggle's emendation of 860 ἐν μέρει θεὸς [3], which in nearly all other editions is the ἐν τέλει θεὸς retained from the manuscript, P. On this line Diggle has written "The literature on the lines is voluminous . . . 'He will learn that Dionysus is by turns a most awesome and a most gentle god to mortals'. As Roux notes, 'L'opposition entre la bonté et la

[1] "What I understood was excellent, and I think also what I did not understand", Socrates on the book of Heraclitus given him by Euripides, Diog. Laert. 2.22.6-7.

[2] 860-1: Roux "ἐν τέλει a été diversement interprété: Hermann et d'autres le rattachent à πέφυκεν et comprennent 'en fin de compte'. Mais Dodds objecte avec raison qu'il y a contradiction entre les deux termes, car ce qui est 'par nature' existe nécessairement dès l'origine." See extensive notes in Rijksbaron on the difficulty with these lines, their punctuation and syntax. The P manuscript's ἐν τέλει is retained by most editors and commentators – Dodds [ἐν τέλει θεός = τελείως θεός], Meunier & Grégoire, Roux, Seaford, Di Benedetto, González Merino, 2003; Kopff: ἐντελὴς.

[3] Which he discusses at Diggle, 1994: 468-70.

cruauté du dieu paraît avoir été un lieu commun.'" Roux gives a long list of references in Antiquity to Dionysus as possessing both certain qualities and their very opposites[4] – sweet and savage, peaceful and bellicose, gentle and wild and so forth – to which Diggle adds Plut. *Dem.* 2.3, 'most dread in war, bringing most cheer in peace'.

Seaford translates 859-61 "and he will recognise Dionysos the son of Zeus, that he was born to be a god in initiation ritual most terrible, but to humankind most gentle." Some other typical renderings of ἐν τέλει are, for example: Gibbons, 2001: "was born a god in full"; Di Benedetto similarly "è un dio nella pienezza dei poteri"; Carson, 2015: "true and consummate god"; Stuttard "a god born truly of a god, a god of terror and a god of gentle comfort for mankind". Line 860 has always struck me as one of those cracks in the text through which the light that the reader is shining on its insides – *phrenes* – or meaning, becomes visible as such. It throws the reader's own silhouette. This is most patently exemplified in Seaford's translation, in which is expressed so clearly the desire to demonstrate the primarily 'ritual', *telestic*, import he has detected throughout the work, by which he seeks to explains it.

None of this is to say that Seaford's reading is wrong; he certainly has the majority on his side in favouring ἐν τέλει. The "meristic" reading is eccentric. Still, it is helpful in bringing into relief the subjective character of interpretation and of translation. On the face of it this is an obvious point perhaps, but one which is most manifest in its significance with this god, and which I think is the strongest clue to what he means in Euripides. By turns seen in this way, by turns in another, indefinitely – in such a predicament, what "ought one to do"? The surest thing is to enter into and commit to social, human relationships in a certain spirit of joy and humility, Euripides implies. This applies also to the modern interpretation of Dionysus and Euripides' dramatization of this particular episode in his 'life'.

Dionysus is the god who shimmers with the animacy of internal tensions, the god who brings into relief the contrastiveness of evaluation, but who also complicates contrastive articulacy and can embody a dynamic movement between opposite values in time. Diggle explains and justifies ἐν μέρει with many parallel examples, "The phrase ἐν μέρει (sometimes ἐν τῶι μέρει) has two main applications: 'in (re)turn', *vicissim* . . . and 'in turn', *alternis vicibus*, one action following another, whether only two actions . . . or more than two . . . or with the implication (as here) of indefinite repetition 'by turns'."[5] In terms of the Dionysus/Stranger we know through the rest of the play, this is the most persuasive reading. It keeps the thread of the text connected with the fundamental property at issue in

[4] Roux, 1972: Tome II, 507.

[5] Diggle, 1994: 469.

Tragedy, viz. the diversity and constant shifting of perspectives and the vicissitudinous character of human experience. This is a dynamic context, and the embodied god of Tragedy is dynamic, by turns and indefinitely, showing one face and then another, as the very structure of 861 – δεινότατος, ἀνθρώποισι δ' ἠπιώτατος – graphically expresses.

Dionysiac religiosity has an alternately daylit, public, communal-ritual face; and a nocturnal, concealed, mystical face. Aeschylus himself, author of several works on Dionysus (including a *Pentheus*, the likely model for Euripides'own Dionysiac Tragedy), was said by Aristotle to have been accused of inadvertently revealing the ineffable mysteries[6]. In public, and even in the public rituals of Dionysus, his dramatic festivals, there is often this threat that the mystery rites, which must be covered up (like the unspeaking Greek women themselves, kept remote, out of the public domain), might be revealed. Aristophanes makes great comedy out of a fictional Euripides' penetrating the ritual of the Thesmophoria, through his proxy kinsman[7]. Famously in Pseudo-Demosthenes, in the case against Neaera, the threat to the city of illegitimate access to exclusive, properly contained, Dionysiac ritual is raised – τὰς δὲ θυσίας . . . τὰς σεμνοτάτας καὶ ἀρρήτους[8]. The making public of what must remain private and hidden is a constant anxiety in this culture, and Dionysus, the only cure mortals have for release from anxiety, *merimnai*, happens also to be a god who straddles the hidden and revealed. He shows whichever face he wishes, being now seen and now unseen. He is a person seen alternately, in phases of concealment and revelation, light and shadow.

It may have been partially Euripides' intention to allude cryptically to secret ritual procedures in replaying a myth about Dionysus. Naturally, *Bacchae* is rich in *Mysterienterminologie*[9]. It is definitely the case however, that if he *did* wish to dramatize the mystery rites of Dionysus *á clef*, that is not all, and not even principally, what he was doing in *Bacchae*. The pattern of resistance and explosive revelation has been co-opted by the poet into the service of a study in human and divine will and identity. Pentheus is at first both willful and unwilling. He is not persuadable and will not see the strangeness of the events around him, and thus does not infer well about the agents and motives behind them. Dionysus attacks him in his desiderative posture and the king becomes a study in desire and its reversal. He becomes merely *involuntary*, the victim of a light frenzy, and thereby less unwilling and eventually, most desirous of that for which he originally felt the strongest

[6] Arist. *Eth. Nich.* 1111a 8-11: ὃ δὲ πράττει ἀγνοήσειεν ἄν τις, οἷον †λέγοντές φασιν ἐκπεσεῖν αὐτούς,† ἢ οὐκ εἰδέναι ὅτι ἀπόρρητα ἦν, ὥσπερ Αἰσχύλος τὰ μυστικά, ἢ δεῖξαι βουλόμενος ἀφεῖναι, ὡς ὁ τὸν καταπέλτην.

[7] See Ar. *Thesmophoriazusae*, esp. 130-573, for transvestiture, penetration of the women's rites and discovery.

[8] Demosthenes, *In Neaeram* 59.74: τὰς δὲ θυσίας ἁπάσας ὁ βασιλεὺς ἔθυε, καὶ τὰς σεμνοτάτας καὶ ἀρρήτους ἡ γυνὴ αὐτοῦ ἐποίει, εἰκότως, βασίλινα οὖσα.

[9] Cf. Riedweg, 1979: 5-10; Seaford, 1996 is as a reading, largely speaking, a tracing of *Mysterienterminologie*, and allusion to ritual and its language, see also Seaford, 1981, 1987, 2006.

aversion. His reversal is a volitional reversal. At points throughout the work we are induced to revise what we think persons are: we are shown that they can be dispossessed of will and mind, that they can be seen to be so different from what they thought, and become so other than what they have been.

7.2 Silhouette – A Tentative and Hazardous Tracing[10]

Jean-Pierre Vernant called the work on agency in Greek Tragedy, from which this study of *Bacchae* has much benefitted, an *ébauche*, "una bozza", "a draft"[11]. Dennett's theory of consciousness describes a process of perpetual, cognitive "redrafting"[12]. Pierre Bourdieu called the work, in which he developed the useful concept of *habitus*, although detailed and lengthy, an *esquisse*; and more recently Walter Burkert offered a *Skizze* of the history of the divine identity the Greeks designated Dionysus[13]. Although this has itself been a long and detailed close-study of *Bacchae*, it represents an attempt to draw – following Alfred Gell's example[14] – what may be called the *silhouette* of an anthropology of person and agent in a Greek Tragedy. The posited relationship of outline to contents, form to meaning, like that between *praxeis* and *ēthos*, will be decisive for any given interpretive posture and its conclusions. One does not spontaneously sketch the profile of Dionysus, but must combine many sketches together in an endless interpretive drafting. It is hard to get at his contents, so one binds together outlines in the hope of achieving a commensurately animated picture.

Although the intention then has been to devote close attention to this particular, already much and well studied play, it is hoped that some of the elements for a fuller profile of Greek Tragedy, generally, have been helpfully sketched out. *Bacchae* is a work of peculiar pertinence for all other drama in its making the god of the theatre a chief protagonist[15]. It is certainly a work which repays close examination as an end in itself. Nevertheless, it is also an excellent portal into the corpus of preserved Classical Tragedy, not only because it is Dionysiac in theme as well as format, but because, together with *Iphigenia at Aulis* and the fragments of *Alcmeon at Corinth*, it is the last of the Classical Tragedies of the great 5th

[10] See § 5.2.4.

[11] "Ébauches de la volonté dans la tragédie grecque", Vernant, 1972.

[12] See Dennett, 1991.

[13] Bourdieu, 1972. *Esquisse d'une théorie de la pratique*; "Dionysos – ‚different' im Wandel der Zeiten. Eine Skizze" Burkert in Schlesier: 15-22.

[14] Gell, 1998: 10-11.

[15] By which logic, Aristophanes' *Frogs*, produced within months of *Bacchae*, ought to have a similar status. If we are ever tempted to mystify Dionysus and discern in him a symbol only of the *spoudaion,* the earnest, we are healthily reminded of the other face of Dionysus that we see in Aristophanes' great play, see also Seidensticker, 1978, 1982; Taplin, 1986.

Century. Its poet has had the benefit of being able to draw on, innovate, respond to and modify the work of many predecessors, many perspectives, as well as the experience of his own career. It is a work that can be peculiarly reflexive about the tradition it will form part of and that tradition's abiding themes and questions, the problems raised and solutions suggested.

From his historically privileged perspective over the tradition of dramatic poetry since the 6th Century, Euripides has selected an episode from the life of Dionysus. He has brought into relief, in his version, themes of great dramatic and philosophic interest: desire and volition; judgement, decision and choice; self-ignorance; the emotional life inside individuals and emotions communicated between them; thought and thoughtlessness, and freedom from thought's characteristic sequences; presence and absence; the dynamic relationship between the natural and the normative; the nature of agency and personhood and what distinguishes divine and mortal persons.

The exploration of values, implicit and explicit, was consistently the project over the course of Euripides' career. This finds a strong and sophisticated expression in *Bacchae*. Euripides dramatizes the introduction of Dionysiac worship and rites. But this is no documentary or neutral narration of that introduction, but a re-interpretation of a mythic episode from the life of the god quite expressly conscious of the reality that humans do not merely transmit but compose stories, *sunthentes logon*. They refute them, stitch them together, embrace them wholeheartedly or accept them, merely because they expect they have nothing to lose in doing so[16]. What he has offered is an interpretation of those rites and that Dionysiac religiosity. Revealing its meaning does not mean "showing" what form the ritual acts take – τὰ δ' ὄργι' ἐστὶ τίν' ἰδέαν ἔχοντά σοι; 471. In *Bacchae* it has rather meant exploring the contents of those acts, what they mean, what they intend or what motivates them. Those "contents" are affective, having to do with the quality of relations between persons – mortal with mortal, mortal with divine[17] – and the quality of agency in the relation that persons have with themselves, their desires and what they are in a position to recognize and know.

Dionysiac contradiction, strangeness and ineffability inspire Euripides' explorations. Nature and the city, the community and the individual, the self and its parts – its identity as person, its potentiality as ethical agent of its self, its contents' "subjectivity", which can be also the objects of various forms of attention – all are presented with great intensity and freshness in

[16] 297.

[17] The Dionysiac rites unify persons with one another and with themselves, and Dionysus' existence is owed in a sense to the original mistake, *hamartia*, of Hera's coming to know of Zeus' relations with Semelē and her strategy for taking revenge for the insult to her own honour, the breach in her relationship with Zeus being a rupture in her *timē,* how she might see herself, her own identity.

Bacchae. None are what they may self-evidently seem, but are deepened and complicated by the drama's voices. The estranging power of the drama constrains us to adopt an anthropological posture. We are confronted with the normative, relative and contingent character of our own basic categories and definitions. The normal, the self-evident, person, knowledge, the identity of desires: we may not take for granted what these are. We are not sure about the source of desires and thoughts. We cannot be certain about the presence of the identity, which really is doing the modifying, checking, articulating and evaluating of "its" desires. The identity of the agent of acts is as hard to locate and opaque (do they originate from without, *exōthen* or within, *endothen*?) as the personhood, and its nature, of Dionysus of *pollai morphai*.

If a divine person like Dionysus can transform desires, and do so because desires were insufficiently transformed to begin with; if he can extinguish mind and presence of self; if persons in collectives can feel that they are not individuals but part of one corporate person – what then is the person and what the nature of this unstable agency to apprehend one's own desires, one's own mind and self? These are some of the questions that issue, with great and immediate force, from the presence of Dionysus, the divine being who makes things flow, turns subjects into objects and throws a bright, flashing light on the complex nature of subjectivity. That nature is ontologically peculiar, something that has the changing shape of time's currents or of fire. It is cognitive, social, volitional and ethical in its contours. This interpretation has searched out these contours of *Bacchae* and sought to trace them under the always interrelated themes of agent and person.

The 20th Century disagreed over the nature of free will or the freedom to act in Greek Tragedy. Some scholars argued that Greek poetry shows suffering humans in an existence radically constrained by Necessity and governed by external, demonic persons and forces. Others argued that there is a development from a view of external agents – *daimonioi*, *daimones* – shaping mortal existence, to an increasingly internalized picture of human persons, having interiority and a developing sense of autonomy – a psychological agency *within* individuals. Even the frustration at feeling constrained would be the expression of an emerging sense of autonomy and its valorization. Other scholars, like Lesky[18], argue that there is a fusion of planes in the tragic world, that there is freedom and constraint. These last interpreters are more persuasive, not least because it is hard to imagine that anyone, least of all the gifted poets of Ancient Greece, could really imagine that humans were *either* completely the objects of forces larger and stronger than themselves, *or* that some part of individuals could be completely independent of their social, psychological, historical and

[18] Lesky, 1966.

cosmic contexts. Between the two extremes there are doubtless many positions taken, whether consciously or through acting in certain ways. Historical people seem to live as if independent *and* caught up in a web of causes and effects, both, or alternately, subject to external forces and subjects of their own lives. Other scholars point out that *our* notion of Free Will is itself a historical value[19]. We distort the ancient material when we apply to it an anachronistic value and the conceptions related to it, a product of Christian theology and Enlightenment concepts of the self. Parallel with this is the disagreement over questions of how to interpret character in Greek drama. The problem it seemed was that we should not esteem Greek Tragedy very highly, if we judged it by modern conceptions of characterization[20]. Some scholars argue for the psychological reading of character, others that this is completely inappropriate[21]. Some see the entire Attic play, and not individual protagonists, as the character or person having *depth,* in the way that a Shakespearean character seems to have this highly prized quality[22]. Some see characters as serving the play's mandate to absorb and thrill an audience, and say they should be judged successes or failures on this basis. Others point out, more sensibly, that that is a very low standard to have for dramatic creations[23]. They also point out that divorcing character from psychological interpretation will be only another kind of distortion, a highly artificial one. I place myself with those of that opinion.

The notion of the real and realistic is what changes. What remains the same is that when certain – surprisingly minimal – necessary conditions of cognitive social and psychological intelligibility are in place, we react to, learn from and are moved by persons and their predicaments[24]. The modern view of character is not the realistic one finally arrived at in some great civilizational culmination. We speak of realism and naturalism and a modernism, which feels it has achieved a closer correspondence to existence, but this is quite misleading. Shakespeare's persons, Balzac's, Dickens', Flaubert's, Joyce's, the contemporary "legal person", or politically enfranchised "citizen": all are historical stylizations, sophisticated fictions. Just as notions of the will and its freedom, the autonomy of the subject and agency are historical, so too are notions of character. If "real" means having more information and details about a person, their biography and their insides, then Shakespeare's characters are far more real to us than almost all the living persons we meet in our lives. However effective they are though, they lack just that essential element that

[19] Rivier, 1968; Vernant, 1972; Gill, 1996.

[20] Easterling, 1973; Gould, 1978.

[21] On this division, see Easterling, 1973.

[22] Gould 1978.

[23] For this so-called *Tychoismus* see Dawe, 1963; Easterling, 1973; Thumiger, 2007.

[24] On tragic "intelligibility" see Easterling, 1973; Gould 1978; Budelmann and Easterling, 2010.

matters most to people: their being alive in time and place, being in embodied co-presence with others, being *sufficient persons*.

7.3 In Conclusion

Dramatic characters are intense creations which derive their memorableness and power from the fact that we encounter them in extraordinary moments, in moments of crisis when, whatever it is that a person is or contains as latent potentiality, becomes vividly manifest through what they do and say and how they react. *Bacchae* represents such a crisis. It is a moment of destruction and loss originating from improvident desirousness and tragical imprudence. Acts are *effective wishes*, the wishes we really have, as opposed to the ones we wished or thought we did or ought to have had. Dionysus was a manipulator of fictions, motivated by a strong, structuring desire. Pentheus was a poor interpreter of fictions, structured volitionally against his conscious will. He was a man of desires presenting and dissembling themselves, going unrecognized or denied to himself. The desires that motivate the actions of Pentheus, Dionysus, Kadmos and his daughters, Zeus, Teiresias and all the others have been given central place in *Bacchae*. The drama has been a manifesting and bringing into articulated relief of the difficulty of recognizing one's own desires, as well as the personhood and motives of others. *Bacchae* has dramatized a crisis of volition and identity which has complicated the normal and estranged the habitual, familiar ways of seeing these things. Identity is not what it may have seemed and perhaps humans do not know so well what they really want, what they mean or what kind of life they are living. The identity of the subject, its desires and its knowledgeability are all terminally entangled. Somewhere between fictional and real, ignorance and knowledge, subjects and objects of desire, inside and outside: person is problem. The crisis at Thebes has demonstrated this.

Setting out this express awareness of the historicity of the posing of the question concerning free will and of the conception of dramatic character and human subject, we turned to a near contemporary of Euripides: Aristotle on agency. The diction of the poet is very close to that which we find in the philosopher's formal and differentiated terminology of voluntariness, desire, deliberation, choice, judgement, imputability and evaluation. We find that the ancient scholar of drama and ethical agency is explicitly concerned with many of the same problems, implicit and explicit, that are found in the poet. We see that, just as we not only retroject modern notions onto Aristotle, but have in fact long been Aristotelians – in part via Thomistic, Christian readings of the Greek – so too Aristotle was not simply retrojecting his interests onto Tragedy: Tragedy was probably one of the sources in his culture that had taught *him* how to think, what to identify as valuable and how to identify it. Tragedy, and

not least the drama of the most *philosophicus scaenicus,* had set Aristotle his terms and parameters of value. Reading Euripides with Aristotle has been a complicated, circuitous way of expressing fidelity to the poet's vision.

In chapter 3, we turned to a reading of *Bacchae* on the terms of a modern philosophy of agency. Being most historical means also embracing our own time and articulated perspectives, not denying them by taking a view as if "from nowhere", as Pentheus thought he could do. After studying *Bacchae* in the light of Aristotelian theory we submitted the drama to a discussion of person and agency in terms of the modern philosopher's exploration of these themes, their definition, nature and importance. Charles Taylor adopts the same premise as both Aristotle and Euripides: human life ought to have an objective and that objective should itself be living a good life: attaining *eudaimonia*. It may be that this imperative is shown most powerfully through negative examples in *Bacchae*, but it is certainly no less the case that it is what is shown needs to be in place, valued and celebrated, 395-9[25]:

> τὸ σοφὸν δ' οὐ σοφία,
> τό τε μὴ θνατὰ φρονεῖν
> βραχὺς αἰών· ἐπὶ τούτωι
> δὲ τίς ἂν μεγάλα διώκων
> τὰ παρόντ' οὐχὶ φέροι;
>
> Science is not wisdom,
> Thinking not mortal thoughts
> A short life, in this light
> Who would pursue great things
> And not attain what is there?

Euripides has taken a strong ethical position and, furthermore, that position consists partly in recognizing the manner and significance of one's *parti pris,* viz. that one is always taking a position even if that is to remain unconscious or unexploring of one's positions. This, however, is not only a rationalist ethics, but one that seems to require emotional transformation; both an articulacy concerning one's desires and a kind of pre-articulate rightness of orientation towards values – such as the value of articulateness – in the first place. One is always living a life, choosing one's orientation towards one's circumstances; it

[25] See also § 3.3 "Knowledge concerning Knowledge".

ought to be the best possible life. One has always a bearing or posture, and it will be decisive, investing circumstances with its own values.

In *Bacchae* we have not simply to do with belief and acceptance of rites, but with the recognition of and the determining character of human choice, judgement, emotion and something so vague and yet all important as *bearing* and the mode of going to things – the receptiveness and attentiveness of disposition. In just the same way Dionysiac religion is Dionysiac relation, for which formulaic fulfilment of obligation is insufficient. Dionysiac knowledge is not reflective, rule-based knowledge and not transmitted discursively or as codes. It is something both more nebulous and more intense than talk, transaction and exchange can comprehend. It is nearer mood and dynamics than something deducible by rules and conveyable through normal language and rational strategies.

In Euripides' handling of the drama of Pentheus, Dionysiac *telein* is fulfillment in the richest social, psychological and emotional sense: not simply ritual rules or formal acts, but the feelings and posture that motivate those acts. The meaningfulness and motivation of belief becomes strongly connected with *praxeis* in *Bacchae*. In the drama the meaningfulness of relations between persons is paramount; they are not simply formal but substantial. It is not sufficient to simply dress one's head and pour out wine and "bacchize", *baccheuein*[26]; one must do so in the right spirit. Drama itself is a drafting or sketch, in the short space of time that each performance admits, of the outlines of the fundamental questions that predicaments bring into relief. It was the work of the first Athenian audience, as it was of the reader, Aristotle, and all subsequent audiences through time, shaped by and modifying the interpretations of their predecessors, simultaneously to fill in and uncover the substance of the work, its ever living import.

Homo sapiens sapiens defines itself and distinguishes itself through its unique cognitive make-up. Knowledge, however, is unstable and comes in different kinds with different values. The most valuable kinds of knowledge may be also the rarest and least accessible. It may be paradoxical, teasing us out of thought like Dionysus, a dancing Sphinx whose identity Thebes does not guess, with disastrous results. In Euripides' world of Dionysus, *sophia* has a special character; it is not what we thought it was, not what has been self-evident. It is suggested that to access *sophia* we must sincerely desire it, but to desire it we must accept its worth – that is act as if we *already know* that it is most precious and worth knowing. Unclarity, uncertainty, instability, recursiveness, circularity or contradiction, some kind of

[26] 312-13: τὸν θεὸν δ' ἐς γῆν δέχου / καὶ σπένδε καὶ βάκχευε καὶ στέφου κάρα. See § 2.6 p. 118 for translation.

dynamic frustration of logic and identity, these seem always moving through the world in the presence of Dionysus.

Equally dynamic, vague and hard to locate is person. In the second part, chapters 4 through 6, the ontic property of person and its detection or manner of inference in *Bacchae* was taken up through the perspectives of some recent anthropology of social interaction, religious belief, art and ritual. In *Bacchae* identity, and with it personhood, is deracinated and problematized. It becomes evident that it is a property, in other words virtual, only ever inferred or expressed symbolically. It is detachable from the body in some instances, but death itself is also in effect just such a detachment of the property of person from the body.

In Chapter 4 I regarded person in *Bacchae* as something not self-evident. Humans do not know for certain what the nature and intentions of their interlocutors and co-presents may be. Other people are opaque. We need to assume other persons have minds, are the subjects of thoughts, in order to communicate and relate to them as persons and agents. We rely on different conceptions of mind, internal or external, or some combination of the two. Gods are special categories of person, peculiarly and notoriously hard to read, though they are typically encountered as intelligible persons in the way that unfamiliar mortals are expected to be minimally intelligible, by default. The concealability of intentions and the dissembling and feigning of humans makes the human social world a context of pitfalls. Human relations are inherently tenuous and people not only make themselves unreadable to others but overestimate their interpretations of their own selves. People are slippery and treacherous, strategic and interpretive, or they are unreflecting, acting automatically. The *polis* is a context of solidarities and their crises. It is not simply a community in place but a *Lebenswelt* of agents, a community of successive communities faced by similar challenges of integration, transmission and durability. Dionysus brings all of this into relief and throws a peculiarly intense light over this social and anti-social world of the *polis* and the challenges it faces to secure truth, verify intentions and endure over time.

Detecting the quality of person or agent is difficult. In Chapter 5 we discussed its "dislocation" and difficulty of location in *Bacchae*. The god who, to be identified as god, requires a mode of inference which humans in Thebes lack, estranges personhood *per se* and problematizes its identifiability. Humans do not detect divine identity or attain Dionysiac knowledgeability through rules, by inductive or deductive inference. Dionysus is a god of phenomena and their traces, a god of natural signs, who requires something nearer the abductive mode of inference, if that implies something like a leap of faith or an inspired form of reasoning. The natural sign is perpetually being absorbed into the social world of interpretive agents; and the denatured sign, the conventional symbol – like Semelē's tomb,

sēma, covered by her son in his luxuriant, winding growth – is "re-natured", made a trace of phenomena and not simply of conceptions, through Dionysus. Fire, hair, laughter, the smiling face – these all show a world of meanings that are not identical with a virtual order of arbitrary or purely cultural values, but the insoluble entanglement of natural and normal.

Chapter 6 represents a re-exploration of a theme that has understandably intrigued many scholars: the Dionysiac face and presence. A mask is a complex object, an objectification in *Bacchae* of an inner identity or a subjectivity. It is an instrument as much vocal as visual, a portal and a cover for reshaping or disguising voice. The relationship between presence and appearance is complex, representing an opportunity that can be exploited by artists whose materials are appearances and by gods concerned above all with presence and co-presence and their "face", *timē*. Like light and shade, presence and absence set each other off in *Bacchae* in a complex enlacement. This is dramatically exemplified, on one hand, through the pathetic apostrophe of Pentheus, a man reduced to parcels of flesh, whose body parts and head are present as objects, while he is absent; and on the other hand, through the address of a daughter who is bodily present but not really there, insofar as she cannot respond or share reciprocal relation or even be said to be in a state of good or evil fortune. To be present is to know oneself so and to know that others can know that too. It is a cognitive and social and phenomenological estate. When its sufficient conditions are in place, co-presence is face-to-face, responsive reciprocity of embodied, time-bound persons.

The spectator in the Theatre of Dionysus is not part of a flock in a congregation, but addressed as an agent, one expected to be capable of self-reflexivity, to whom human subjects are intelligible; one expected reciprocally to abduct agency and infer cause and motives in others, such as he or she experiences in him or herself. Events and actions on the stage, talk and feeling, these imitate and re-constitute the human life in a cosmos populated also by non-human persons, agents not subject to that force most defining for human life, time. Life, like knowledge and other persons, has not been what we may have thought. In Euripides' Theatre of Dionysus, existence as predicament is reviewed. We are made to look again at what a person's true identity may be, how it stands or flows, and how that is expressed; what being mortal, changeable beings must mean for the manner of our living and our bearing towards things and persons. The *a priori* value of reflection and the acceptance of established moral yardsticks, a certain level of ethical self-reflexivity calling for the re-evaluation and recognition of both received wisdom and the new: this is the special kind of moral wisdom prescribed in *Bacchae*. The wisdom of the Euripidean Dionysus is really a bearing towards wisdom itself, a being receptive and holding it dear, *philon*. Dionysiac wisdom is a knowledge concerning knowledge.

When Socrates told Euripides that he "understood" and also did not "understand" Heraclitus' words, he used the verb *suniēmi*, which means understand because it means "bring together", "connect", like the English "to make the connection" or "piece together". The Greek view of cognition has this dimension of a process of linking or binding and setting elements in the order they properly have. Similarly, to interpret a riddle is *sullambanein*, "bring together". Knowing is not only passive registering or perceiving, but has this active element, which I have called "bearing" and which is always determining. Seeing this is the work of Dionysiac interpretation. It means knowing that one is there, seeing and shaping how one is seeing. Pentheus fails to make connections in the right way; he draws conclusions, deduces relationships from what he thinks he already knows and becomes himself traumatically "unbound". It is a great paradox that persons like Pentheus act and commit unreflectively but not spontaneously. They act out of impulses yet cannot enter into the immediacy of Dionysiac relation and knowledge and the abductive inference, free of pre-supposition, that Dionysus summons forth. Dionysiac *sophia* is a binding action with a binding effect. Individuals are bound together in forms of community and in forms of attention through Dionysus.

Dionysus is *en merei* "continuously in turn" of one kind and then of another: absent and present; partially understood and partially misunderstood; showing a human face and a divine one; creative and destructive; cruel and gentle. The world of Dionysus is a condition somewhere between knowledge and ignorance. He is a god of rhythms, returns and circuits. We try in vain to canonize the Dionysiac – establish a fixed rule or measure, *kanōn* – but perhaps we flout his main intention when we codify a "Dionysianism". No timeless paradigm suffices with Dionysus, only a perpetual receptiveness to the unforeseeable, the strangeness and newness of an order of time – *aei ta epigignomena* – perpetually unfolding: bringing both *eudaimonia* and *kakodaimonia* in turn.

This has been an interpretation that sought to be commensurate with the peculiar character of Dionysus *en merei*. It has been, one might say, a *meristic* reading rather than a *telestic* one seeking to identify an underlying initiatory or ritual pattern, or a *maniac* reading in the tradition of the most influential, vestigially Freudian style of Dodds, which saw Dionysiac exuberance as a healthy "canalizing", through ritual, of libidinal energy. The *meristic* posture wants only to remain receptive – *paradechomenos* – to all possibilities as the emphasis falls differently, now here and then there. It can hardly be said that the *telestic* approach of Seaford or the *maniac* one of Dodds, and the forms these have taken in Roux, Di Benedetto, Segal and others, are not full of profound insights, they truly are. This interpretation owes a great deal to the work of these scholars.

In Greek drama, in complex unreadable rhythms, *alternis vicibus* what is low becomes high; what is light, darkness; good fortune metamorphoses into evil, *over time*. Kadmos, Pentheus, Oedipus are the models of this alarming subjection to vicissitude. There is a heightened sensitivity always to the dynamic character of existence. The paradoxical nature of things is powerfully expressed through the reversals of Tragedy and its intense studies of mortals caught in the irreversible current of time. A person is now blessed and now wretched; now a king and now a slave; now ignorant and now learning. Circumstances constantly shift and illuminate things differently. In Dionysus' co-presence mortals are dancers on flashing feet, tireless in the dark night – *en pannuchiois chorois . . . leukon poda* – mortals joyfully transform – *anabaccheousa* – throwing back their heads (*deran*: lit. "neck") into the dewy *aithēr*, 862-5. With Dionysus mortals assimilate themselves to timelessness itself, for a while. They become dynamic and harmonized, the dancer indistinguishable from the dance. What is timeless – *homēlix chronōi* – was once new, what is *nomos* once emerged or sprang out as *phusis*. Time congeals and dissolves; knowledge follows, turning into ignorance and ignorance into a new knowledge. In all things there is a complex rhythm, a plaiting of qualities. Concealment leads to revelation, of nature and norm, just as Dionysus is a divine identity now one way and now another – ὡς πέφυκεν ἐν μέρει θεὸς.

It is a great and dangerous mystery; perhaps it remains better not uttered, *arrhēton*. The human world of culture and reason, *logoi* and *nomoi*, rises always out of matter and nature, *phusis,* and they are terminally entangled with each other in radical reciprocity. Humans divine meaning in nature, finding everywhere "natural signs" which enter into and re-constitute their symbolic worlds of culture – *polis* and *oikos*. Such signs are uncanny, partaking of human time *and* cosmic timelessness, the human and the non-human; so too does the *daimonion*, the divine person that is Dionysus, 888-96:

> κρυπτεύουσι δὲ ποικίλως
> δαρὸν χρόνου πόδα καὶ
> θηρῶσιν τὸν ἄσεπτον· οὐ
> γὰρ κρεῖσσόν ποτε τῶν νόμων
> γιγνώσκειν χρὴ καὶ μελετᾶν.
> κούφα γὰρ δαπάνα νομί-
> ζειν ἰσχὺν τόδ' ἔχειν,
> ὅτι ποτ' ἄρα τὸ δαιμόνιον,
> τό τ' ἐν χρόνωι μακρῶι νόμιμον
> ἀεὶ φύσει τε πεφυκός.
>
> [The gods. . .] cover up in complex ways
> The lingering foot of time and

Hunt down the unholy man. For
Nothing is ever stronger than acknowledgement
Of the *nomoi* and mortals must attend to them.
Light is the expense to hold
That it contains power,
Whatever it is that is the *daimonion,*
And this, over the long *durée*, is *nominon*
Will be [*phusei*] and always has been [*pephukos*].

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